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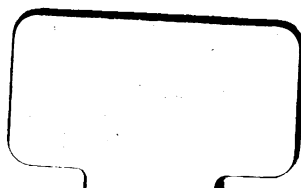
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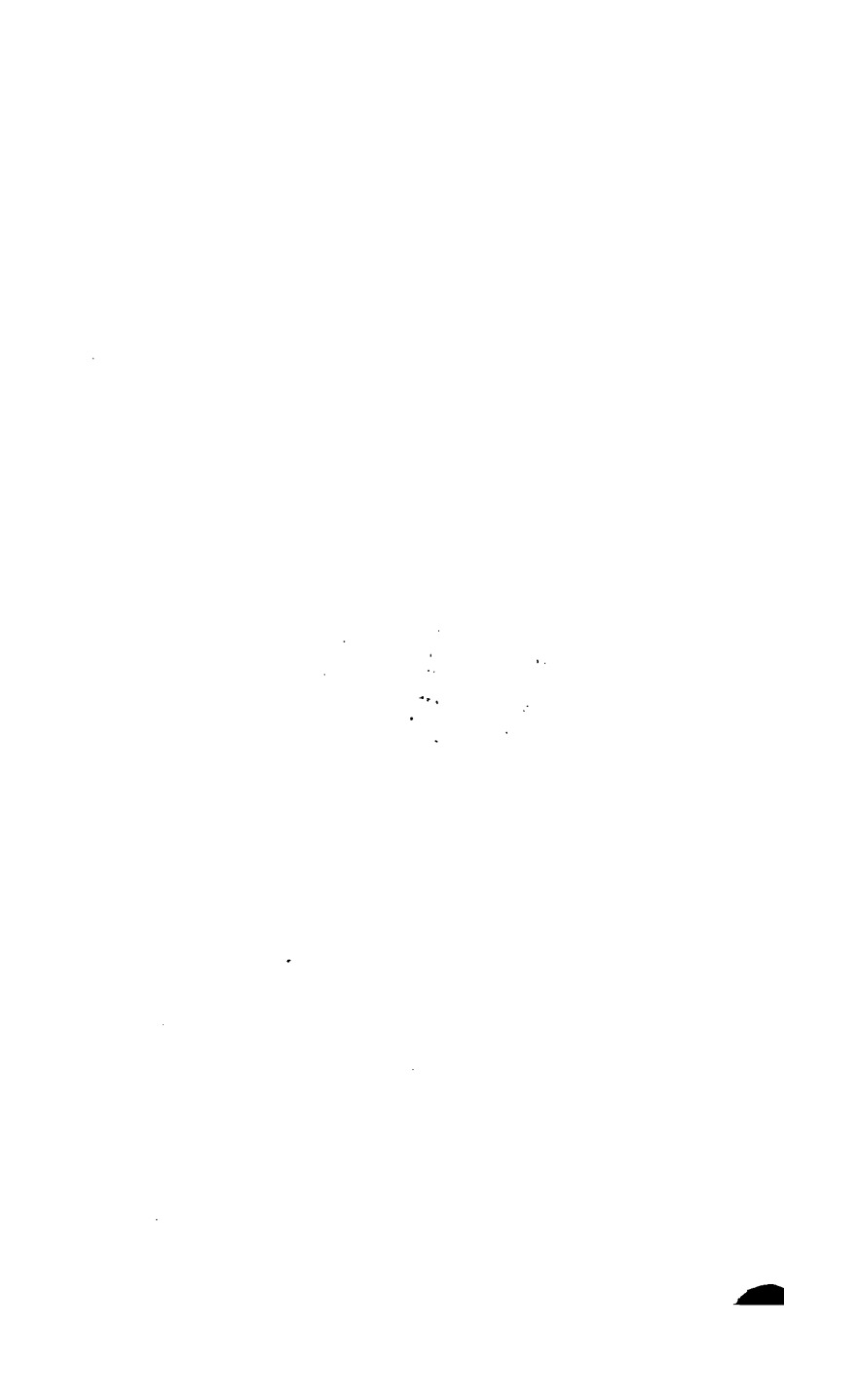
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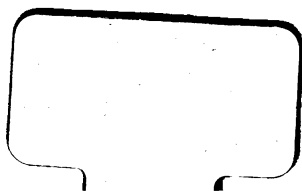
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Marianne Barker
1845.

3 vols

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION;

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE COURSE OF LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF *Albertine*
MME NECKER, DE SAUSSURE.
//

VOL. I.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIRST FOUR YEARS OF
CHILDHOOD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1839.

Lb

371.3
N 366ea
v.1

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

TO

GEORGE TAYLOR, ESQ.

THESE LITTLE VOLUMES

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY

INSCRIBED

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN presenting to the public the following Translation of Madame Necker de Saussure's admirable Treatise on Education, it is necessary, in justice to her, to state that it does not contain the whole of the original work. Entertaining the highest opinion of the *Education Progressive*, the translator has often regretted that it was not more generally known in England; and has had reason to suppose that in some instances mothers have been deterred from reading it by its diffuseness and occasional tendency to metaphysical disquisition. Wishing, therefore, to make the work, in its English form, as popular and as generally useful as possible, many passages, excellent in themselves, but

which did not seem to bear directly on the practical part of the subject, have been entirely omitted ; others have been considerably abridged ; and the style has occasionally been so modified as to render it more consonant to the taste of the English reader.

How far the object which the translator had in view has been attained, it remains for the public to decide.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN I first undertook to write a sort of moral history of life, in which the various means of improvement offered at different ages should be pointed out, I expected to pass rapidly over the period of childhood. Impressed with the important idea that our existence here is only the prelude to another, — that our passage through this world is only an education for a better, — I wished to follow out this idea in all its bearings. My attention was attracted rather to the result of life, than to that preparation for life itself which occupies its commencement. I considered the education necessary during childhood to be a subject which, as a part of my plan, I was called upon to notice, but which had already been exhausted by the many distinguished writers who had devoted their thoughts to it.

But, on examining the subject more attentively, it appeared to me that it was still little un-

derstood; especially as regards the first years of infancy; to which even those who have reflected and written on education have paid little attention. Instructors by profession are not called upon to take charge of children at so early an age; and, when they do apply themselves to the task, they consider their future pupil as so much raw material, destined to receive its value from their hands. They look upon him as an ignorant being who is to be instructed; and it never enters their imagination that, in order to render him capable of being brought to that point at which he becomes susceptible of rational education, the endowments of the child must be very different from those of the man.

Women, on the other hand, however quick in discovering the most trifling marks of character,—in guessing at the most slightly indicated intentions,—content themselves for the most part with understanding everything by means of sympathy. Their feelings tend directly to practical utility; and when they have once been led, by their quick discernment, to form a decision, they take no interest in general results. I had myself been long and earnestly occupied with education; but I had studied my own children, without imagining

that I was studying children in general; all my observations appeared to me individual. Not having found, amongst the various systems of education with which I made myself acquainted, any one which satisfied me, I took as my guides, good sense,—at least what appeared such to me,—and an experience which had been acquired by degrees.

Yet when this experience had been confirmed, and a greater degree of leisure had permitted me to weigh and examine my reflections, it seemed to me that, in the constancy of the phenomena presented to our view by infancy, the effect of general laws was perceptible. I may, perhaps, in describing these phenomena, have been too much led away by the charm attending the contemplation of this age; but owing either to the numerous facts I have brought forward, or to the conclusions I have deduced from them, the subject has insensibly grown under my hands.

The first volume begins with a short introduction which explains the plan of the whole work, and has afforded me an opportunity of entering into some details as to the different objects which have successively occupied my mind.

The preliminary chapter, immediately following this introduction, is devoted to the exposition of such general principles as may be applied to every period of education. Nothing can be of more essential importance to the instructor than that he should render to himself a strict account of his views; that he should clearly understand both the nature of his object, and the best means of attaining it. But how many considerations present themselves with regard to these two points! What an extensive field of reflection is opened to us at the mere contemplation of so great, and yet so common, an undertaking as that of educating a child! The final destiny of man, — the obligations imposed on him by Divine law, and by the constitution of the world — the qualities by which he may be rendered capable of fulfilling these obligations — all become the subject of anxious meditation. And when our attention is drawn to the means of education, when we consider that our aim should be to influence the will of the pupil, to bestow on his mind an impulse which may continue through the whole of life, we perceive that the instructor must not only enter on the infinite study of the human mind, but that he must also make himself

acquainted with the order in which the *moral* faculties are developed. Nor must such a study be viewed merely as an idle speculation; it must be acknowledged as the foundation, the very essence, of the art of education.

The first book is employed in the consideration of the first two years of life; a most important period; but one during which we can obtain only uncertain glimpses of light to direct us in our task of education; for the child cannot yet speak, and therefore cannot assist the observer in explaining what passes within its mind. Yet the searching instinct of a mother will often penetrate through the mists in which infancy is shrouded, and will supply valuable hints, which may afterwards be more fully developed by reflection.

On the other hand, the period which intervenes between two years old and four, the examination of which occupies the second book, is one from which the most valuable instruction may be derived. The progress which has been made by the child, though it has not yet effected any change in his moral constitution, assists us materially in discovering his real character; and it is at the very moment when the peculiar nature of

infancy is on the point of being effaced that it displays itself most clearly. The results of those facts relating to the soul, which have been afforded by the consideration of this period and the one preceding it, will be found in a concluding chapter, which completes the history of infancy.

One great advantage to be derived from the study of very young children is, that it teaches us to estimate more highly the gifts with which they have been endowed by their Creator; gifts so peculiarly adapted to their future destination, that, with any other moral constitution, their capability of improvement would not have been so great. When we consider them with reference to the future, we see that their many seeming defects,—even their weakness and imperfect developement,—are all the result of a perfectly wise arrangement. They possess,—what constitutes the perfection of an ignorant being—a disposition most happily calculated for receiving instruction; and they have besides—what is the perfection of a dependent being unable to provide for his own wants—a wonderful talent for obtaining assistance. They have the power of exciting in our breasts feelings of kindness, devotion, and enduring

affection, such as we experience for them alone; they inspire us with a tender and sympathizing pity, at the same time that they please and amuse us. With too little foresight to be oppressed by the idea of their wants, they possess all the gracefulness, and even pride, of independence; and, while they are actually dependent upon us for every thing, their affection assumes an air of disinterestedness. When we see a young child, fresh from the hands of his Creator, noble, from the promise he gives for the future, and interesting, from the character he already displays,—we behold at once a charming creation, and a masterly and promising sketch.

In the preliminary chapter with which the second volume begins, the general principles of intellectual instruction are considered, without any reference to the age of the pupil. The third and fourth books contain directions and advice relative to two successive periods of childhood; and the fifth points out such marks of character, and intellectual development, as distinguish boys during the period immediately preceding that of youth; and concludes with a summary of the general principles of moral education.

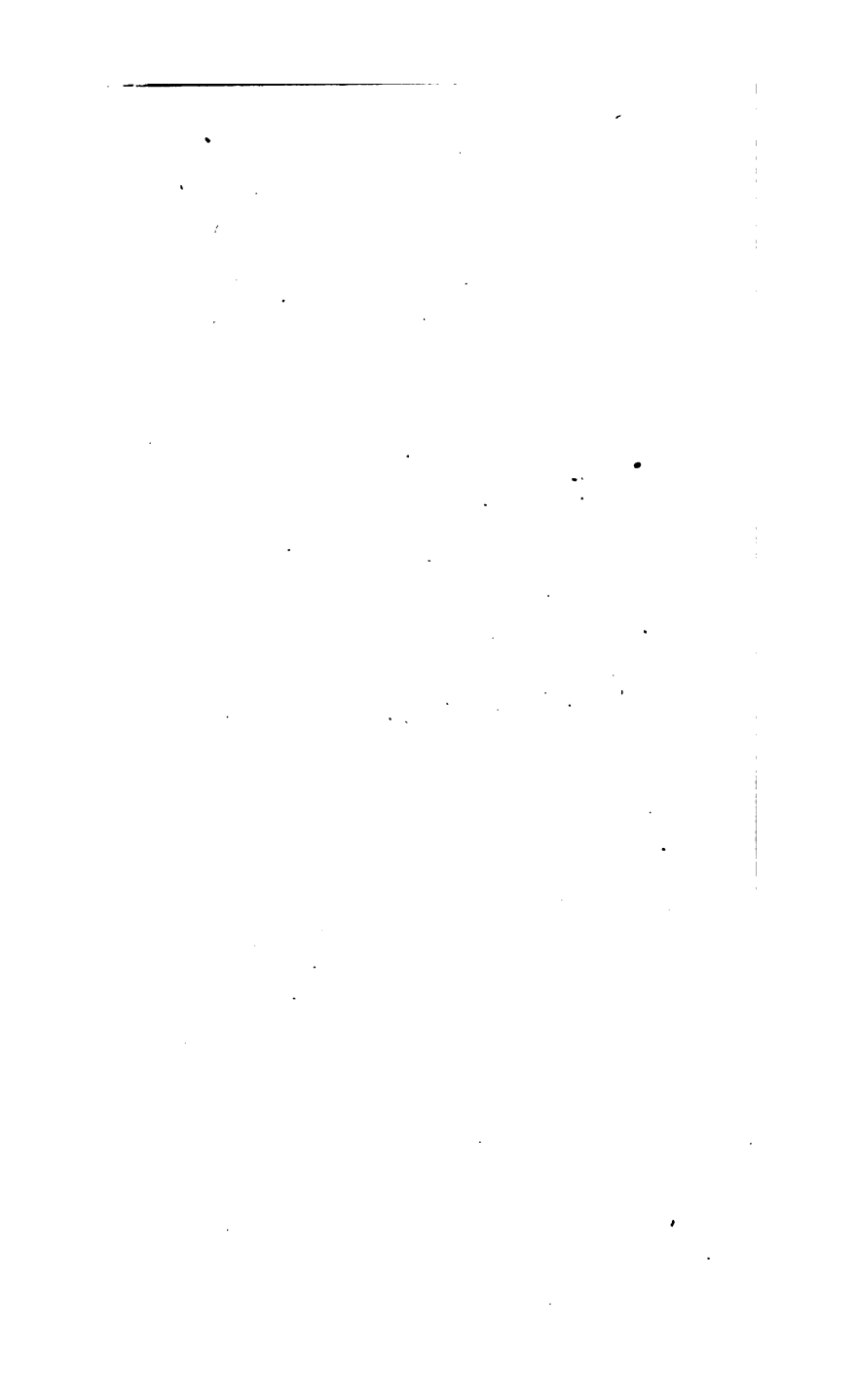
In undertaking this work, my original plan (to which frequent allusion is made in the course of it) was to devote a third volume to the task of showing how the principles which I had laid down might be advantageously applied to the destiny of women; and, had I accomplished this design, the work might have deserved the title which I had — perhaps too rashly — bestowed upon it, *Considerations on the Course of Life*. But the length of time which elapsed between the publication of my first and second volume* has given rise to many new reflections. I feel that it would be presumptuous to make any promise for the future. Should life and strength be granted to me, I shall, however, return with pleasure to my original design, and offer to the public a new work, which will form a continuation of the present volumes. But this is in the hands of God.†

My regret at not having advanced beyond

* The first volume of the original work was published in 1828; the second in 1832. The prefaces to the two volumes have been thrown together, and abridged by the translator.

† The third volume, to which Madame Necker de Saussure here alludes, has since been published; and a translation of it may be expected to follow the publication of these two volumes, should they meet with encouragement from the public.

the limits of childhood is, however, diminished by the idea that I have completed what is, in all probability, the most useful part of my plan. The period of which I have treated is almost the only one in which a really efficacious influence can be exerted, or a beneficial impulse certainly communicated, to the moral being. And as the influence of religion, such as I have represented it, has a constant tendency to reanimate the powers of the soul ; — as it excites tender and generous feelings, — enlightens the intellect, and developes even those faculties which depend on the imagination, — the impulse which it has been my object to favour must extend itself beyond the season of childhood. The spirit of Christianity is a spirit tending constantly towards perfection. Christian education is a constantly progressive education.



INTRODUCTION.

WISHING to describe the progress of life, — the feelings by which we are animated at different periods, and the changes effected on the character by the course of time, — I have yet a further object in view. Convinced that our noblest object in studying the human heart should be its amelioration, I am earnestly desirous of ascertaining what means are best calculated for elevating and sanctifying the disposition, and rendering it more favourable both to the tranquillity of the soul, and to the development of its activity.

It is, indeed, to the history of the soul that I would more especially direct my attention; — a history of all others the most important to individuals; for the changes which take place in the “inward man” are the real events of life. On the state of the heart depend not only contentment of mind, but that series of incidents which is superinduced by the need we feel of satisfying our desires. Even the most unforeseen events cannot with any truth be referred to chance;

they are the consequences of former propensities. Hence it is, that in yielding to particular trains of thought, we are, without being aware of it, laying the foundation of our future life. The succession of our feelings forms an indistinct sketch of that drama, the representation of which is afterwards afforded by our conduct.

Education, therefore, continues through the whole course of human life. Every year of our existence is the consequence of those which have preceded it, and the preparation for those which are to follow: every age has a double task to fulfil — as regards itself, and as regards the age by which it is to be succeeded. And though, as we advance in life, the vista is shortened, and it might seem as if less preparation were necessary for a continually decreasing journey, there is another totally opposite point of view; — there is an interest which increases with our growing years. The shorter the time we have to live, the more value does each moment acquire in the eyes of a religious man. He who is anxious to obtain the prize in the race feels his courage and his hope redouble as he approaches the appointed goal.

During the weakness and inexperience of infancy, the child is not responsible for his own education; the care of it is not entrusted to him; but if it be true that the proper task of education is the developement of all the faculties, no fixed

limits can be assigned to it. The mind may always be enlarged, — the heart always improved; and even the most elevated of all actuating principles — devotional feeling — has a natural tendency to increase in energy. All the springs by which children are moved, — outward circumstances and events, — inward feelings and dispositions, — continually exercise a like influence on our own souls. How then can we set any bounds to the period of education? Continual modifications are taking place in the character and in the mind, and hence education is rendered always possible; nor is it only possible, it actually exists; in some form or other, it is always going on; the only doubt is, how far we are able to direct it.

In truth, the developement of the character does not depend entirely, either on the will of instructors during childhood, or on that of the pupil himself at a more advanced age. But it does not hence follow that the will has no power in either case. Because we cannot do every thing, we must not conclude that we can do nothing. Unknown to us, nay, even in spite of us, many causes are constantly at work; but there are also many regular and kindly influences, the employment of which is in our own power. It is precisely because incidental education is constantly going on that we seek to

counteract its effects by one which is premeditated.

After having described the first years of infancy, in which, with some slight shades of difference, the plan of education is much the same for all children, I shall advert to the peculiar character with which, even at a very early age, the education of women ought to be impressed. Indeed, throughout the whole of this work, my attention will be more particularly directed to female education. This part of my subject will be less difficult, both because I know my own sex better, and because the consideration of their destiny is more closely connected with my design. The relations of domestic life occupy a more important place in their existence, and they are consequently more under the influence of natural events. Following no particular profession, the vocation of human beings in general is more clearly exhibited in their lives. They are much more decidedly daughters, wives, and mothers, than men are sons, husbands, and fathers. The differences of age are also much more remarkable in women than in men. A man who has embraced a certain profession passes his whole life in a repetition of nearly the same acts ; and this uniformity of action necessarily produces the same uniformity in his feelings. On the contrary, all the interests of woman, as well as her position in society, change

with the growth of years, and it is therefore much easier to distinguish the influence of time upon her character.

But, though addressing myself more willingly to women, I would not do so exclusively. When considered in a religious point of view, the vocation of human beings becomes equally striking in men. As Christians, the domestic relations of life acquire a greater degree of importance in their eyes; advancing years bestow an additional character of gravity on life, and all differences of rank or situation vanish before the idea of a future world.

The plan followed in the arrangement of this work may be explained in a very few words.

The subject of which it professes to treat is what may be called *premeditated* education; by which is meant, that education of which the object is to take advantage of the influence of persons and circumstances, in order to favour the perfecting of the individual. Viewed in this light, education continues during the whole of life; the agents in it are changed, but the work to be accomplished remains the same; from the hour of birth to that of death, there exists a pupil to be brought nearer to perfection.

Thus considered, life may naturally be divided into three periods.

During the first, which comprehends the

period of infancy, education is directed by an intelligence superior to that of the individual who is to be elevated by its influence.

During the second, which embraces the period of childhood and that portion of youth which is still subjected to the parental authority, the pupil ought to co-operate more and more in his own education.

Lastly, during the third period, the individual having become the arbiter of his own destiny, is called upon to labour himself for the perfecting of his character.

It is in the first of these divisions of human life that the writer who becomes its historian finds his path the most clearly traced. He can address himself only to the instructors who have undertaken the direction of this age; and henceforth education, properly so called, that is to say, the care of which children are the object, becomes the subject of his observations. But, were I to enter on the subject in all its extent, it would be far too great, both for my own ability, and for the design I have in view. Obligated, therefore, to contract my plan, my attention will be principally directed to the formation of the character. Passing over particular modes of instruction, I shall, in the general ideas which I may bring forward on the developement of the mind, consider more especially the *moral* effect of different studies and occupations.

After having, in a preliminary chapter, pointed out what views the instructor should, in my opinion, adopt, I shall endeavour to associate myself with the child, and to enter into his feelings during the whole of that period in which he is, from unavoidable necessity, subjected to parental control. I shall describe, as accurately as I can, his moral constitution at different ages ; and draw from such observations the practical results which evidently arise from them.

The statement of these observations and their consequences will generally be followed by the exposition of some truth which may seem to apply particularly to the age in question. And, when the changes produced by time bring with them corresponding changes in the consequences of this truth, I shall again present it under a new aspect. In this manner the same principles will be found, differently developed, at successive periods of education.

As the pupil advances in years he will enter on the task of his own education. He begins to understand its object ; he approves of the means employed, and, before long, will himself suggest and choose them. As yet his parents retain all their rights over him ; but by degrees their power escapes from them, and their authority, were they to enforce it, would have little good effect. Their influence, entirely moral in its nature, should be the more cautiously em-

ployed, as it must soon diminish, and as the time during which it can be exercised will suffice to give an impulse to the whole future life.

It is not, however, very easy to use judiciously this precious but frail relic of decaying authority. All our previous observations are sometimes set at nought by the sudden changes which take place in the character of the pupil. We hardly recognize him : and he knows himself as little. His ardent and volatile imagination continually substitutes what he believes for what really exists ; and he lives in an atmosphere of delusions, which no power has yet been able to dispel. He is ignorant alike of the scope and of the limits of his faculties ; of what his will can, and what it cannot perform ; he is, by turns, sanguine to excess, or discouraged in an equally unreasonable degree.

Whilst this state of fluctuation still continues, and the youth is assailed on all sides by new passions and temptations, the hand which has hitherto guided him is insensibly withdrawn, and he is often launched alone amidst the rocks of the world. Such, however, is the influential power of the principles inculcated by a good education, and of the generous feelings which may be easily inspired at this age, that a young man will often not only escape these dangers, but even form for himself virtuous

resolutions, the accomplishment of which will occupy his whole life.

The remaining part of this work will afford a view of the successive opportunities of advancing towards perfection, which naturally present themselves after the pupil is grown up. Scarcely is the young man freed from the yoke of paternal authority before a most powerful sentiment obliges him again to part with at least some portion of his liberty, by uniting to his own destiny that of another. Hitherto his own advantage has been the end of all his efforts; the object of devoted attention on the part of his parents, he was entering into their views, as well as promoting his own interest, by endeavouring to adorn his mind with knowledge, and his soul with virtue.

Nor is it without a great moral shock that the pivot of life can be displaced, and the close bonds of egotism relaxed. Such a revolution is reserved for the power of love; and is, perhaps, only fully accomplished by the feeling of parental affection; for this it is which teaches man to feel that entire devotion of the soul by which he is led to give, without expecting any thing in return; — without hoping for any pleasure equal to that which he confers. At this epoch I shall again introduce children; not as being themselves the object of education, but as the means of improving and elevating their

parents, by placing them in a situation in which all their interests and feelings concur to make them acknowledge the necessity of morality, and of its only true source, religion.

Then it is that existence has received its most complete developement; and man, as a useful member of society, as a son, and also a father, sees the various ramifications of his duty extending far and wide, and animates a sphere of activity proportioned to the greatness of his faculties. Yet he soon discovers that these faculties are limited. Perpetual contact with realities dispels many of his illusions, and, while his influence on those around him is increasing, his own ardour diminishes; the vivacity of his impressions is deadened by the constant repetition of worldly scenes, and, in proportion as his internal existence becomes less vivid, he seems to live more and more in his children; it is on them that his now disenchanted imagination rests.

But as these children grow up, they will not entirely realize his expectations; they are soon able to do without his care, and at last entirely escape from him. And so it is with a thousand other objects of deep interest: — the esteem or gratitude of others; — the good that he had hoped to effect; — everything becomes fainter, loses its brightness, and is obscured in the distance. We see that things can go on without us, and

we detach our affections, not only from the
but from ourselves also.

Yet, to the man of a religious mind, there
not wanting compensations for the loss of
fascinating charms and delusions of life. There
ennobling feeling of duty survives, and best
an energy on him which is independent of
earthly ideas; and, as the visible world dis-
appears from his view, the invisible one pre-
sents itself to him, and the only Being who
the only Being who never disappoints the
With more calm and elevated feelings, he
able to form a more correct estimate of
objects around him; he begins to comprehend
why he has been placed on this earth, a
better to understand the scheme of human
life. He sees that although he was se-
lected here in order that his faculties might be de-
veloped to an amazing extent, yet that the con-
tinuance of his attachment to the objects which
have promoted this developement was not in-
tended. His intellectual powers must take
loftier flight, and raise themselves to a high
contemplation than that of terrestrial objects
and that ardent love, which had been excited
in imperfect creatures, must be fixed on a perfect
Being. His developement, therefore, is
suspended; his progress, though less apparent,
is not the less real; his contemplative facul-
ties gain more than his active faculties lose; a

even in this life, the perfecting of his character becomes manifest.

Thus it is that the complete disinterestedness, the unbroken serenity, the peaceful and holy goodness of old age, seem already to invest its venerable brow with the glory of immortality; and we behold the verification of those beautiful words of Holy Writ, "Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."*

The constant existence of this principle of developement in the soul is, indeed, a strong proof of its immortality. Nor does the interruption to its activity which takes place in old age, owing as it is to the decay of the material organs (a cause which might affect any age), prove any thing against the possibility of an eternal progress in the faculties of the soul. This progress requires, indeed, the concurrence of the will: those who do not penetrate beyond the exterior of things, remain for ever occupied with appearances only; and with them, the progressive education of life is altogether wanting. Time, far from improving, tends only to deteriorate their character; for there is a perfection of egotism as well as of elevated and religious feelings. Then it is that the heart of the selfish man grows more and more callous; and even that personal happiness, to

* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

which every thing had been made subservient, deserts him: he has allowed himself to become insensible to the most ennobling pleasures, and all others must inevitably pass away. To him, old age is, indeed, a season of desolation: to his fearful imagination, death is indeed death: — a greater evil, perhaps, even than annihilation. But here we pause — for there can be no pleasure in tracing such a picture.



PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

SECTION I.

On the Object of Education.

THE object of education should be so to train up a child as to render him capable of fulfilling the future destination of his life. But what is the general destination of human life? On the answer to this question the direction of all education must evidently depend. Nor must we imagine that we have determined what this direction should be, when we say that the aim of education is to develop the faculties; this is rather its business than its aim.

No doubt the faculties are cultivated and expanded by education; and were it our only object to afford our pupil the means of existing in this world, it would still be the business of education to unfold them. In savage as in civilised life, certain qualities are cultivated; but are there not some which we would favour

in preference to others? And do we not wish to give some particular direction to that progressive improvement and expansion of the human mind for which we are so anxious? As the slightest difference in the proportion of its constituent elements influences the nature of our moral constitution, it is of the highest importance to know what end we propose to ourselves, in order to decide on our mode of action.

Now, the most striking and sublime characteristic of Christianity is, the having proposed to men something more than mere earthly felicity as their object. Christianity declares to us in its sacred language, that with the assistance of Heaven man may, even in this life, begin to recover the lost image of his Creator; and that if he fulfil the conditions proposed to him in the Gospel, — conditions, the fulfilment of which will, of itself, tend to the purification of his heart, — the great expiation which has been offered for his sins will procure for him eternal salvation; that is to say, reunion with God in another life.

Ideas so sublime are in harmony with their source. We could neither wish for more, nor expect less, from a divine revelation. Reason, experience, cool reflection, the aspirations of the heart, all declare to us that we must often renounce present happiness in order to satisfy the demands of conscience; and that though

misery is the invariable attendant on vice, virtue is not always rewarded with prosperity in this world.

We are apt to mistake the means for the end. The desire of happiness is one of the motives which urges us to the improvement of our faculties, and it thus favours our progress towards the true end of our existence. But the knowledge of one of the springs which impels us to action, is not the knowledge of our final destination. He who is ignorant of the use of a watch, and who examines its interior attentively, may, by his sagacity, comprehend its mechanism, may discover wherein its moving power consists, and how its action is distributed, but could not find out that this complicated machine is intended to be a measurer of time. That is the secret of the inventor, and can be known only to those who are acquainted with his intentions. And so neither can we determine the destination of human life, if we consider only the mechanism of our actions. But if the result, to which the course of life leads us, be observed, we shall find that our supposed end — happiness — has not been attained.

Besides, this is considering only one of the many motives by which we are influenced. It cannot be denied that the love of what is good, just, or true, is also natural to man. No being is so abandoned of Heaven as not to feel that

he is subject to some moral obligations, and that he has certain duties to fulfil in this world. This is the true law; that law of the soul, which is always admitted on cool reflection: that law, which, though we continually transgress, we cannot disown. The mere desire of happiness is but a physical propensity, acting upon our senses, and those inclinations which are under their dominion, as the force of gravity acts upon inert matter; whilst the real privilege and distinction of man consists in his power of resisting such impulses.

The contradictory results presented by the intricate study of the human heart can never be explained, if we allow of only one motive of action. In the physical world we meet with a continual opposition of forces, a continual balancing and counterbalancing; and why should we expect to find only one principle of action in the moral world? St. Paul tells us that we have two laws within us*; and our inward feelings, our experience, our reason, all confirm this declaration. A blind instinct, necessary perhaps to the physical order of things, impels us to seek after pleasure, and thus favours the developement of our faculties; but we feel that these faculties, and life itself, are intended only to elevate us to a superior state of

* Romans, vii. 23.

existence, and to restore degraded human nature to its original privileges.

It may indeed be argued that a future eternal happiness is proposed to us as our great object by religion itself. But here we enter on an entirely different train of ideas. On this, as on many other subjects, the sacred writers have made use of language and expressions familiar to us; and with the more propriety in this instance, as all the ideas they give us of future reward are necessarily associated in our minds with that of perfect happiness. The mere idea of existence is of itself so delightful, that immortality, accompanied with an exemption from the troubles and evils of life, appears to us the height of felicity. But among the various imperfect representations afforded us to direct our hopes, we never find the idea of enjoyment held out as the great object, but always that of a state of greater purity and dignity. Sometimes we are told of "an incorruptible crown of glory *," — "an exceeding weight of glory †," — "the inheritance of the saints in light." ‡ Sometimes we are to be "partakers of the divine nature §;" we are told of "new heavens and a new earth, where dwelleth righteousness ||;" &c. &c. The word glory is

* 1 Peter, v. 4.

† 2 Corinthians, iv. 17.

‡ Colossians, i. 12.

§ 1 Peter, i. 4.

|| 1 Peter, iii. 13.

constantly employed : and as this word is often used to designate the progress of a Christian in holiness in this world, and as we see that the faithful are, even here, "changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*," it appears that our reward is to be of the same nature as the means by which we are to obtain it, and that the regeneration begun in this life will be perfected in another. That law of our immortal souls, which impels us to seek after perfection, is thus sanctioned and confirmed by religion in the most energetic language. There is a natural instinct in the soul of man which leads him to the desire, the presentiment, of something nearer perfection. He continually examines, retouches, and corrects, not only his works, but the instruments with which he has produced them, and the methods of working devised by his sagacity. Hope, never realized, is yet never entirely frustrated. Though he cannot attain perfection, he gains improvement: to be always striving after more than he can accomplish, is a part of his lot in this world.

The great object of education should be to lay hold, as soon as possible, of this tendency ; to excite, to foster, and to regulate it, should be our most sacred task. And as a rational being can attain the highest degree of hap-

* 2 Corinthians, iii. 18.

piness, only by following the course of his true destination, we should find that by inspiring our pupils with this desire of continually striving after perfection, we should in reality be forwarding the attainment of happiness itself.

Education, then, ought to agree with our two-fold destination: it ought to prepare a child for two successive states of existence: he is at the same time an immortal spirit, merely passing through this world, and a weak creature sent into it only to suffer and to die. We are so constituted that our nature harmonizes with both these vocations. The soul is endowed with some faculties which relate only to its sojourn upon earth, and with others which carry its hopes and views beyond this world. Both ought to be cultivated by education. Since God has not thought fit to call us directly to Himself, but has obliged us to seek Him by the path of human life, it becomes the strict duty of an instructor to furnish his pupil with every thing necessary for the journey.

But that life itself is only a journey, and that every period of it should be connected with the idea of advancement, are truths which should never be forgotten; and which seem to me not sufficiently dwelt upon in the various definitions which have been given of education. One would suppose that the object was to bring the pupil to a certain point, rather than to

give him such an impulse as would carry him far beyond that point. And yet the most important thing of all is to give this impulse. The progress already made is not of half so much consequence as the wish to make still greater progress; so that we ought to be much less anxious as to how far a child has advanced in his career, than as to the energy with which he seems disposed to pursue it farther.

Hence it is, that so many apparently well-conducted educations fail in their results; hence it is, that so many minds become deteriorated. When there is no internal lively impulse, every thing decays, and dies away. Human nature is so constituted that we cannot stand still; if we do not advance we shall fall back; it requires a certain degree of strength to prevent our descent, and we never, perhaps, possess energy enough, except when we are endeavouring to ascend.

According to Kant, the object of education ought to be, "to develope in the individual all the perfection of which he is capable." This is an excellent definition; but as such a task cannot be completed in childhood, and requires an entire existence for its accomplishment, I would suggest a slight alteration, and would say, that it should be the aim of education, "to bestow upon the pupil the wish and the means of attaining that perfection, of

which he will at some future time be susceptible."

SECTION II.

How the greatest Improvement is to be made of the Natural and Social Inequalities of Human Beings.

FEW human undertakings resemble that of education; for the obstacle opposed by our natural imperfection to the accomplishment of every good work, is there presented to us in a double form, — in the teacher, and in the pupil — in the workman, and in the material to be worked upon. Our zeal and our imagination are restrained on all sides, for our business is not to create, but to direct; and to direct, too, that opening of the mind, for the appearance of which we often have so long to wait. Our ideas of perfection would require, that when the work of education is finished, this developement of the mind should be completed, and that the noble attributes of humanity should display themselves in all their brightness: but we must not venture to hope for this satisfaction; for as social order imposes a certain limit upon whole classes of men, so does nature upon individuals.

We find from an attentive observation of children that they are severally endowed with faculties varying in power, and more or less

susceptible of improvement. We know little of the different proportion, and extent, of these faculties, and we see much that we would wish otherwise; but there is one object, of superlative importance, which should be kept in view, and the knowledge of which must be acquired from our observation of these natural gifts; and this is, to discover that happy combination of them which will place their unequal forces in equilibrium, and enable them to fulfil the conditions imposed upon them by society and religion. Hence it follows that there is a species of perfection peculiar to each individual, which we should, as it were, feel beforehand; representing to ourselves a particular combination of qualities, such as we have never perhaps seen, but of which a glimpse may be afforded us in some happy moments by our pupil himself.

We can hardly doubt that man was intended to offer us an example of the same harmony of proportion, which we find in all the works of nature; we seem to perceive this harmony still existing in the age of infancy, and a good education ought to preserve it; but experience shows us that this object is seldom, if ever, accomplished.

In observing the generality of mankind we feel that most men are not what they might have been: we find individuals indeed with great and noble qualities; but on this very ac-

count we remark with the more sorrow certain faults forming a striking contrast with them, and, indeed, scarcely compatible with their more characteristic qualities: even in speaking of those whom we most admire, we often exclaim, "what a pity," and this expression might be applied universally.

On the other hand, on a nearer examination of less remarkable characters, we often find them not so insignificant as we had at first imagined. All possess some one talent, some one quality, which fits them for some particular vocation; and a sudden flash of light will at times display a tender or generous emotion, revealing to us a species of merit, or an amiable feeling, which might, under different circumstances, have been ripened and brought to maturity.

But these sentiments are still more strengthened when we reflect upon our own characters. Self-love whispers to us that we were intended for better things, but that circumstances have been unfavourable to us, and that our own efforts have been weak and unsteady. We cherish this illusion the more from its being to a certain degree true; and we are constantly regretting an imaginary lost superiority, a certain bright expansion of our faculties, for the display of which an occasion has never been found.

Should the same creative hand which has displayed such boundless variety throughout all its

productions, have stamped on every human being a peculiar character, this should be hallowed in our eyes; and our best efforts should be directed to find the means of most perfectly uniting it, unaltered in form, to the other qualities of the individual.

→ All great talents are accompanied in a remarkable manner with the stamp of originality; as may be observed in all those who have distinguished themselves either by their virtues, or by the arduous undertakings which they have accomplished. This originality is often seen in children at a very early age, presenting to our observation an indication of character which we should be careful to turn to advantage. It is the proof of a vigorous and healthy state of mind; but as soon as ever there is any appearance of the natural disposition being constrained or impaired, we may be certain that we are following a wrong plan.

At the same time it is of the utmost importance to stop at the right point. Parents are often tempted to take advantage of the ruling passion, and are afraid of bringing down their child to the level of ordinary characters. But with children nothing is of so much consequence as to have their faculties and powers of mind well balanced: let this be once accomplished, and then we may with advantage favour any particular disposition. Genius itself produces

its finest fruit only in a well balanced mind ; we need not destroy the distinguishing feature, but we should endeavour to make it harmonize with the rest of the character.

We are sometimes led into the same error from different motives. It is such a tiresome task to be constantly endeavouring to rouse those faculties which are naturally sleepy and dull, that we are too much disposed to work with such materials only as lie ready to our hands. By this means one pupil becomes all memory, another all imagination ; and we prepare for ourselves and them a painful disappointment. The same remark may be made with respect to the use of particular motives, such as self-love, or a morbid sensibility. It is only when these dispositions are already lively and ardent in the soul that they can prove useful auxiliaries in education ; and yet it is this very circumstance which makes it also particularly dangerous to excite them. By constantly exercising the predominant faculty, and allowing the others to remain idle, the moral disproportion becomes continually greater.

It happens sometimes that the weakness of some one absolutely necessary faculty in children, (such for instance as the power of reasoning) prescribes it to us as a duty to retard the progress, and limit the exercise of the others. The impulse given must not be confined to any one

faculty, or set of faculties; for though each is to be exercised separately, in order that the strength of each may be ascertained, they must yet all move forward together. Nor must we confine our attention to effects which are merely transient in their nature; we must also examine carefully into the causes by which they have been produced.

Here it may be observed that religion, which should be the centre and point of union of all the various branches of education, may be taken as our guide in every period, and will indicate to us the exact point at which the cultivation of any particular faculty should be checked.

If the strength of some one faculty be out of proportion to the rest of the character, the child, pleased with the exercise of it, enjoys too keenly any trifling success which he thus obtains, and almost of necessity becomes vain and conceited. No longer discriminating between true and false excellence, his moral and religious progress, — the only progress which is of any real importance — ceases to interest him; his devotional feelings become colder; his sense of duty weaker; and the high opinion which he conceives of his own powers, leads him to look down on his equals with contempt. Thus, instead of really advancing, he is retrograding; and his superficial attainments only serve to conceal his real ignorance.

The only certain proofs of the entire success of education are, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour — those two distinguishing characteristics of Christianity which, presenting as they do, a beautiful and harmonious development of our immortal nature, seem, naturally and justly, to have formed the chief features in that divine example which the Gospel has proposed to all mankind. Should these sentiments be prevalent in our pupil, should they grow with his growth, and influence his whole conduct, then every other faculty of his mind may be safely cultivated, — education need not then fear to strengthen every power which he possesses. In his hands the most energetic faculties will only become better instruments for executing higher designs; and as religion and morality alone can secure to us purity of intention, so the cultivation of the intellect alone can inspire us with the hope of these intentions being fulfilled.

This applies equally to every condition of life. No doubt in education, as in every thing else, some allowance must be made for the great diversities in the situations of men: indeed, were it not necessary, it would still be right to make this allowance; for in all human society there must exist a relative standard of perfection for each particular class. Not only must the different qualities of the individual harmonize with each other, but the individual

himself must harmonize with his condition in life. When the feelings, opinions, and tastes are in unison with the habitual occupations, the duties belonging to every situation are rendered easier, and its pleasures greater: it follows, therefore, that it is not desirable to stimulate the faculties to a point beyond that in which they are likely to be naturally and regularly exercised in real life. Hence arises a scale of cultivation proportioned to the different conditions of life; but in the lowest classes of society, education has always a task to fulfil, always a certain degree of intelligence to cultivate.*

In the higher ranks of life education has indeed a great and arduous task to perform: duties, always important as regards the individual, become more and more so, in proportion to the influence he has the power of exerting. We are commanded not only to do good, but to do *all* the good in our power. Talents must not be buried, nor our light hid under a bushel. Such are the words of the divine law; and little or no good can be effected without the aid of an enlightened understanding. It is required to enable us to struggle against the temptations to vice, that perennial spring of misery; and it

* A passage relating to the duty of educating the lower classes has been here omitted by the translator, as being a subject on which there is now so little difference of opinion, that it hardly needs to be advocated.

is required to enable us to console every kind of distress. Place men in the same position, and inspire them with the same zeal, and they will be found to contribute to the happiness of their fellow creatures exactly in proportion to the degree of intelligence they possess. A certain enlargement of mind is necessary both to enable us to influence others, and to use our influence judiciously. Every acquisition, every talent, extends the sphere of our power and our usefulness; affords us the means of influencing a greater number of minds, and by their means acting upon others; and thus the influence of one benevolent being spreads far and wide, carrying intelligence and instruction in its train.

SECTION III.

Influence of Education on the Strength of the Will.

WE cannot pretend to form the characters of human beings unless we examine into the secret springs which move them to action; and as we can influence intelligent creatures only by means of their will, any knowledge which we can obtain on the best method of guiding this powerful engine must be of importance. It would indeed be mere trifling to occupy ourselves with other objects of education, if we had not at least reflected on this, which forms the grand difficulty

both in life and education, and has therefore a paramount claim on our attention.

The weakness and errors of our will are but a part of the imperfection of our nature. The effects of this evil may be restricted, or softened; but will always be in some degree perceptible. Limited, however, as the power of education is in this respect, we do not make use of it to so great an extent as we might. There are three points which, it seems to me, ought particularly to be insisted on.

1. To strengthen and elevate the will; to preserve, as much as possible, its high station, as reigning over all human desires, and finding in their several forces, sometimes an obstacle, sometimes an auxiliary, but never a master.

2. To give to our pupil such tastes, sentiments, and habits, as will exercise a salutary influence over the will; and, even when it is least capable of making any efforts, will impel it to a right line of conduct.

Lastly; since, in spite of the most watchful care, a remissness, an indifference, or even a temporary depravation of the will, must at times occur, it should be an essential point in education to open to our pupil a pure and high source, whence his soul may recruit its wasted powers, and imbibe new vigour and strength.

When we speak of the will merely as regards its strength, independently of its direction, we call it firmness, energy, or constancy; it consti-

tutes the degree of vital essence, the proportion of moral existence, which each individual possesses; it bestows authority on his words, his actions, even on his silence; and renders him the object of an esteem, a love, and sometimes a fear, proportioned to our idea of the strength of this internal power.

I hardly know whether or not it is in the power of instructors to increase the moral energy of their pupils; but it seems quite certain that it is very easy to diminish it; and that this is an error into which we are but too apt to fall; indeed, education too often tends entirely to destroy all firmness of character; and consists in a system of means which serve only to weaken the energy of the will. If it be of a gentle and persuasive nature, it prevents the will from attaining any firmness; and if it be severe and harsh, it bends or crushes it. Its object is to form habits; but it is the peculiarity of habits that they lead to the performance of actions, without any reference to the will. It makes great use of the instinct of imitation, the effects of which are much the same as those of habit; and sometimes it even makes use of deceit, the most pernicious example of all, both as regards morality, and energy of character.

But it is easy to understand why parents, though fully acknowledging the importance of this quality, are sometimes unwilling to encou-

rage it in their pupils : it offers a constant obstacle to their plans of education. They wish to inspire their children with feelings of industry, prudence, generosity, politeness ; but in order to do this they are continually obliged to require the sacrifice of their will. To diminish the energy of this faculty is, therefore, so convenient, that they do it almost involuntarily ; and, perhaps, would do the same even on principle ; for, dreading, as we always must, the errors of the will, uncertain what direction it may take, we scarcely dare run the risk of giving it an energy which may prove only an additional danger. Yet we ought to feel that the resources of education are such, that we need not be afraid of cultivating firmness and strength of character. Indeed, as there is necessarily something repressing in the authority of parents or instructors, as the customs of society have the same tendency, and as the progress of civilisation has destroyed many of those prejudices which were in themselves sources of energy, it is of great importance that we should endeavour to counterbalance these various effects, and should restore to our children — the men of the next generation — that nerve and vital strength, the germ of which seems to have been planted in their souls by their Creator.

But it is not by divesting ourselves of firmness that we shall succeed in cultivating it in our

children. If our conduct towards them be weak and vacillating, we add a bad example to an equally injurious influence; or rather to the absence of that influence which we ought to exercise. We must submit, if we may so express it, to the necessity of commanding. The state of subjection to which man, in consequence of his perfectly helpless condition, is obliged to submit during infancy, is no less necessary to the formation of his moral character, than to the preservation of his existence; it is the means which Providence has ordained for the development of all his faculties, including, of course, that of firmness; and its object is the attainment of free will. All that education seeks to accomplish is to render man free; and when (no longer led by blind instinct) he knows how to choose what is best for the good of his immortal soul, he will be trusted to his own guidance.

We may, however, err on the other side, and weaken the energy of the will, by allowing it to be too constantly in subjection to the influence of that of others; and, even in our own time, though education has, perhaps, been stripped of its ancient harsh and severe character, we have not entirely avoided this fault. A gentle, and even voluntary servitude enervates the soul, at least in as great a degree as a more stern government. We are apt to deceive ourselves on this point; because our children seem to have plea-

sure in obeying us, we feel secure; because they are happy, we conclude they are free; and we mistake their ready zeal for energy. But if the will have no determination of its own, if it only follow, however cheerfully, the impulse given to it, we can place no reliance on its steadiness; and, however eager or zealous it may appear, we cannot draw any certain inference as to its firmness, while it continues in this state of demi-subjection.

We may often remark this effect in education. To obtain the willing obedience of a child is certainly a great satisfaction; and when we have accomplished this point the greatest obstacles seem to vanish. His obedience has nothing servile in its nature; it is given with ease and pleasure; every thing is favourable to us, and we make a rapid progress. But we must not allow ourselves to be deceived by this seemingly prosperous state of things. It is not by constantly acceding to the wishes of others, that we cultivate decision of character in ourselves; and what is called a good disposition is not always the thing most to be desired. A child who is anxious to please his parents, may conquer the first difficulties of learning; he may be a model of correct conduct as long as he continues to be influenced by this desire; and yet may be found entirely deficient in consistency and strength of character, when this motive no longer exists.

He has not learnt — what is absolutely necessary to the formation of a strong mind — to propose to himself a decided object, and to choose, at whatever risk, the best means of accomplishing it. A determination founded upon mature and unbiassed reflection, the power of foreseeing the inconveniences of the part we have chosen, and the resolution to brave them, — these are the qualities which constitute an energetic and firm character.

As children must hereafter be masters of their own conduct, they should be brought up under the discipline of two systems apparently opposite in their nature: one of subjection, that they may be taught to restrain any capricious desires; the other of liberty, that they may possess independence of character. Hence arises a difficulty which is not often considered in its full extent; and hence it is that we meet with so few decided characters, even after the most careful education.

Irresolution, one of the most common marks of the feebleness of the will, seems almost entirely out of the reach of our influence; we know of no certain rule for its cure, and reasoning seems of little use. Indeed, we often find that those who are undecided in character are rather inclined to reason too much: every object presents to them a thousand different sides, and every cause a thousand different

effects. What their minds want, is that energetic direction which gives to one single motive the preponderance over every other, and makes one single object hoped or feared. Must we, then, lead our pupil to determine at once, without any reflection, and without considering what will be the result of his decision? This, surely, would not be reasonable; reason, indeed, advises a totally opposite conduct; and hence it is, that it tends in some degree to increase this fault of irresolution.

Again, as regards inconstancy of character,—when the will is active enough to give a temporary appearance of strength of character, yet has no durability, and, consequently, no real firmness, — what can the instructor do? He cannot revive inclinations and tastes which have died away; and, on the other hand, to persist in a line of conduct, the only motive for which had been a desire, or a feeling which no longer exists, would be so absurd, that it can never be laid down as a general rule. If, then, our object be only to conquer a childish obstinacy, reason may, with advantage and propriety, be called in to our aid; but if we wish to inspire our pupil with firmness of character, reason is of much less use. All that we can then do, is to take advantage of particular circumstances as they occur; to prove that on the occasion in question the best plan

would be to persevere. But, at the same time, it is evident that advice founded on such reasoning will not have any influence on future conduct.

In order to favour both the work of reason, and the cultivation of the best motives, education ought to begin by endeavouring to strengthen the character, — by preparing the soil in such a manner that every good principle may take root in it, and bring forth fruit. The natural volatility of children renders this somewhat difficult; and since, as long as there is no fixed principle in the mind, we are never certain of being able to influence them, the means of cultivating firmness of purpose seem wanting, as well as the quality itself. Yet we must not despair. If we do not possess motives founded on reason, we have a resource, less elevated in its nature, but often very efficacious, in the power of habits. Energy is sometimes a gift from Heaven; but it is also the result of the natural developement of the moral strength, provided that there has been no obstacle to its progress. A child will learn to restrain his passions from the habit of obedience which he has acquired: by being accustomed to decide for himself whenever circumstances will allow of it, he will acquire decision of character, and his will, no longer merely passive, gains vigour from exercise.

In short, the great problem to be solved, in the government of children, is the same which occurs in all governments; the object always being to combine the greatest degree of individual liberty with a perfect obedience to the laws.

In order to obtain this end, nothing is so much to be avoided as commands half insisted on, obligations half enforced, insinuations, hints, silent solicitations; by such a plan, while pretending to leave the child to himself, we are really binding him with a thousand ties. He lives in an atmosphere of doubt which enfeebles his energy, and weakens the strength of his intentions. If the boundaries of freedom and duty are destroyed, a vague uncertainty is spread over both his plans and his actions; he is for ever regretting a resolution which he has not taken, and wishing to retrace his steps. If we would preserve the child now, and the man hereafter, from so painful a state, we must take care that on his entrance into life he is subjected to a just authority, while, at the same time, his will is allowed to act a definite part. Hence it is that public education, where the whole community is governed by fixed laws, and no constant watch kept over individuals, is most favourable to the formation of energy of character.

Another question remains to be decided; how far strict discipline, united to great inde-

pendence, is consistent with gentleness of intercourse, and with habitual confidence: how far, especially in girls, it can be combined with that grace, those engaging charms, that delicately-shaded respect and refinement of manners, which are so peculiarly required in women. It may be that in their case this kind of discipline should not be so long continued: yet we must never forget the enervating effect of any other system. But, after all, reason, even when assisted by observation, can only point out general principles, in the application of which innumerable modifications must always take place.

I will only add, that strong minds alone are capable of deep feelings; and that delicacy and refinement of conduct will naturally result from the full developement of the feelings of the heart and conscience.

SECTION IV.

Motives by which the Will is influenced.—Influence of Religion on the Will.

NOTWITHSTANDING the absolute power with which the will seems to rule in the human breast, it may be guided and influenced by motives whose direction it is inclined to follow: and hence education finds in such motives a

secondary source of energy. If they are important, if they deserve the approbation both of our conscience and of mankind, their influence may be lasting, and a settled habit may be contracted. But if we trouble ourselves only concerning actions in detail, if it be our whole object to favour or discourage these, we may bring forward a multitude of trifling reasons, without inculcating any general principle. The child may indeed behave correctly, but his moral feelings remain untouched; and we are only forming, by a different method, an inconsistent and unsteady character.

And, undoubtedly, the motives of children are what alone we ought to consider as of any importance: at that age the effect of any action is of little moment; and even the best actions have no value but as indications of the disposition which has prompted them, and which may continue to influence the conduct in after life. We often observe in children the best intentions, accompanied with an anxious desire to do their duty: the germ of such a disposition exists in every mind, and particular circumstances, or a mother's happy instinct, will often foster and develope it. A more exact knowledge of the real motives by which the will is influenced seems equally necessary for education and for morality; and as, generally speaking, these motives are essentially the same in men as in children, the

most certain way of gaining this knowledge is to make our own hearts — always within reach of our observation, and always able to afford us instruction — the objects of our close examination.

The importance of the motives by which children are influenced being so great, to inspire them with right ones ought to be a principal object in education, and one of the first to which our attention should be directed. There are some motives which, as differing in kind, it may be useful to distinguish. Of these, some might perhaps more properly be named instincts, as they regard only the preservation of our physical existence: others, though to a certain degree selfish, are yet more nearly allied to morality, and relate to that part of our happiness which depends on the opinion of our fellow-creatures. Such is self-love, with all its various modifications. Others, again, more elevated in their nature, — such as a love of what is just, true, or beautiful, — introduce the soul into those calm regions where it becomes purer, more enlarged, and more enlightened; whilst others, more impetuous and turbulent, seem to transport our existence out of ourselves, to make it centre in external objects, causing us to live, as it were, in another soul. Such are the tender affections, which, from their first faint appearance, as shown in the instinct

of sympathy, to their complete developement in the devotion of love, make us continually feel for others emotions as strong as any which can be excited for ourselves. Lastly, there is one motive which, uniting in itself all that is great and tender and devoted, raises the soul, not only above itself, but above this world, and gives it a foretaste of eternity. I need not say that I allude to religious feeling; which, more pure, more elevated, more closely connected with morality than any other, is alone able to give a favourable and lasting impulse to the whole of life.

But the field which opens upon us here is far too extensive to be easily travelled over. Devotional feeling, united to Christian faith, and drawing from the Holy Scriptures rules for both regulating the conduct, and restraining the passions, presents such a copious source of moral virtues, that it is impossible to treat of it in detail. I will however mention one point of view in which we may consider religious feeling as distinguished from every other; I allude to the means which it affords us of seeking assistance from Heaven.

“Enslaved by our passions,” says Rousseau, “we are made free by prayer.” Never was a more profound truth uttered, even by a mind less prejudiced. The same truth is acknowledged when we say that, though unable to conquer our

unruly passions by open opposition, we can yet weaken them by prayer.

'The constant need we feel of entering into communion with God, of appealing to Him in our troubles, expressing to Him our desires, examining in His presence both our past conduct and our future plans, and beseeching from Him the strength necessary for our continuance in well-doing, and for renouncing our sins,—all this may be felt by a child. The more he is accustomed to weigh all his motives and intentions in the presence of a perfect Being, the stronger will his moral feeling become, the more tender his conscience, and the more will his heart be purified by the renovating power of repentance and love. Such is the energetic impulse which may be given by education, and which may counteract, without destroying, the alternations of the will. But as these fluctuations will still recur; as the love of God, and obedience to his holy laws, will not have equal power over the soul at all times, how can we guard our pupil against these lamentable vacillations? The more sensitive the conscience becomes, the sooner is any deviation from what is right perceived, and the more alarm excited by self-reproach. The soul, discouraged, plunged into despair by the dread of having offended the supreme Judge, and by the frequently miserable consequences of sin, is sometimes led into the

most deplorable extravagances. This we find to have been the case from the history of all false religions. Hence it becomes of the greatest importance that we should be able not only to guide and determine the will in the first instance, but to raise and support it during the whole course of life. And in this consists the triumph of Christianity; here its distinguishing characteristic is displayed in the brightest light. Its pervading spirit is one of sympathy with our misery, and assistance against the greatest of all evils — sin; the morality which it inculcates, more strict and severe than any other before the commission of sin, is yet merciful and compassionate to the repentant sinner. In this respect how widely different from the writings of mere moral philosophers, which are always tinged with a certain degree of harshness! Like the laws of that human society, whose interests they advocate, they grant no pardon to the guilty, and hardly ever believe in repentance. Deriving all faults from some original wrong impulse, and attaching far too much importance to first impressions, they are inclined to consider man as “a mere bundle of habits.”

But surely man is much more than this: he contains within himself a principle of life — a regenerating principle, though one which would remain inactive without the aid of Christianity;

for hope is the mainspring which brings this principle into action, and Christianity alone can at all times revive hope in the soul ; Christianity alone affords it both to the guilty and the dying ; Christianity takes man as it finds him, innocent or guilty, young or old, honoured or despised ; always comforting and supporting him, and offering him motives for repentance and amendment. The spirit of Christianity is able both to form habits, and to break them ; to counteract, or to avail itself of, the influence of time ; and hence it is that it possesses such an invaluable and peculiar advantage in the regulation of the whole life.

The instructor stands in the same relation to the pupil, that the Creator does to man ; he desires his present and future welfare, and he studies as much as possible the purposes of God, in order that his own views may harmonize with them. In tracing the course of the instructor's reflections, we shall be giving a short recapitulation of the principles already laid down.

Sanctioned both by the authority of Christianity and by his own conscience, he determines that happiness is not our only object in this life ; and that in following that law which would impel us to make it our great aim, we obey only a blind instinct, a mere bodily impulse, which influences us before the will is roused into action.

But it is the task of education to render the spiritual law, — that law which urges our moral feelings, and all our intellectual faculties to be severally and continually striving after perfection, — predominant in the soul.

At the same time, the extent of the plan which the instructor proposes to himself must depend on the possibility of its being executed. Should he succeed in forming the best possible combination from the unequal faculties of his pupil, the result, however deficient it may be in brilliancy, will present harmony and originality of form, based on real goodness. But in order to accomplish this, any partial progress which might be disadvantageous to the moral and religious developement of the soul, must be arrested, or the order and consistency of the character will be destroyed. On the other hand, when there is nothing unfavourable either in the character or external circumstances, the views of education may be much more extensive; and it may favour the growth of every faculty, with the full security of their taking the right direction.

Can the instructor, however, hope for success in any of his plans, without the concurring assistance of the pupil? How must he act in order to form and direct the will; a faculty so irregular in its action, and apparently so little amenable to any law? Without fully under-

standing its nature, he observes that it is generally deficient in strength; incapable of accomplishing its noblest task — that of ruling over the wishes of the heart, — it submits at present to external influence. Hence arises the necessity of two opposite modes of treatment: for in order to accustom children to restrain their passions, they must be subjected to an exact discipline; and at the same time they must be allowed in some degree to act independently, or they will never acquire decision of character. Yet this discipline and this liberty may exist together, provided their respective limits be well defined.

But the will must not only be strengthened, but directed. How are these two objects to be attained? Is the aid of reason sufficient for this purpose? In the examination of this question, the instructor perceives that reason acts only by the instrumentality of such inclinations as are already formed; that it regulates movements, but does not cause them; and consequently that it becomes necessary to cultivate in children those disinterested feelings which alone will be able to counteract the energy of their selfish instincts. During the course of a too exclusively intellectual education, the heart remains unexercised; and thus self-love is cherished, and the passions are left unrestrained.

Here, then, the value and importance of religion is felt. If we wish to bestow energy on the will, we have in religious feeling a powerful and universal motive, deeply rooted in our nature, and tending more than any other to what is good; and if we wish to moderate the will, the morality of Christianity is more pure, more strict, and better suited to the wants of human beings, than any philosophy. The whole system of our duties might be easily conceived by the intellect, without our feeling any wish to apply the results to ourselves. But what particularly distinguishes religion, and displays its divine energy, is the power it possesses of purifying and regenerating the heart. The only source of hope which can revive the soul, sinking beneath the weight of its sins, is the pardon on which it is taught by faith to rely; a pardon applicable to all; for a tender conscience will always find some subject of self-reproach.

Whatever path, then, the instructor may follow, he must continually return to that point to which every path leads: — God, the first cause of every thing, is the object towards which an education, embracing every thing relating to man, must ever be directed. But, though a future life is the ultimate object of education, it has another and nearer object, in the right conduct of the present life. The pupil is taught

not only to know the world, but to admire it, he is taught that every thing great or good which it contains is of divine origin. Innocent pleasures, knowledge, the general enlargement of the faculties, are all allowed and encouraged by his education; while, at the same time, a dangerous degree of enthusiasm, particularly unnatural in children, is repressed. In short, it seems to be the part of education to sanctify human life; and to discover and bring into action those heavenly agencies which are spread abroad in this terrestrial world by its divine Creator.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE MEANS OF IMPROVING THE ART OF
EDUCATION.

It has been asserted by a celebrated philosopher, that we are not naturally endowed with any instinct of which we can make use as a guide in education; but that it is an art, which must be carefully studied. And this is no doubt perfectly true. While all other animals constantly bring up their young in the same manner, man follows no invariable rule. How many different customs may be observed among savage nations! Some, as soon as their children are born, plunge them into cold water; some flatten their heads between two boards; others leave them in cradles, suspended to the branches of trees; and some, again, swathe up their limbs in tight bandages. Even a mother's affection, the most universal of all feelings, has allowed such barbarous customs to be introduced; and even her love has not been enlightened enough entirely to abolish them.

Civilised people have felt and reflected more on the subject; and amongst them, therefore,

we find but little remains of such revolting customs. Yet they have not been able to fix on any determined principles of education. Towards the middle of the last century much attention was bestowed on the subject; its extreme importance was acknowledged; the greatest talents and the most eloquent writers were employed in its cause: yet the more they reflected and reasoned on the subject, the less do they seem to have understood it. What, then, is the great desideratum in this important art? That, to which we seldom have recourse so soon as we ought — experience. We want such numerous and minute observations as can alone afford a solid foundation for our reasoning.

In the valuable work on this subject, by Miss Edgeworth and her father, (where all that is treated of, makes us only the more regret what is omitted), they have observed that education is an experimental science: yet, even they have published the result of their observations, instead of the observations themselves. But every one knows how many different conclusions may be drawn from the same facts; and that in writing on any science, it is not enough to mention results; the circumstances which have led to those results should also be stated. And the experience of a single family, highly gifted as that family may have been, is far from being sufficient for the end we have in view.

It is astonishing, that while in every other science requiring observation, such admirable perseverance has been displayed, no regular and methodical attention has ever been paid to the observation of infancy. How many, armed with telescopes, will watch night and day in order to prove the correctness of an astronomical prediction ! How many keep an exact register of the state of the atmosphere, the wind, heat, or rain ! How indefatigable are our annotators ! And yet, amongst all these philosophers, there is not one father who has taken the trouble carefully to note down the progress of his own child !

Even with regard to the physical part of education, which might be supposed to come more immediately under the consideration of the learned, how much uncertainty still prevails ! Some customs, evidently pernicious, have indeed been abandoned : the first step has thus been taken : we know better than our predecessors what should be avoided ; but are we more sure what plan we ought to pursue ? Many questions still remain which can be answered only by experience. We are still ignorant whether it is right or wrong to make children submit to the dominion of physical habits — whether we should, in spite of their continued crying, persevere in subjecting them to some particular treatment : such, for instance,

as the use of the cold bath; or whether the constant distress of the child should be a warning to us to desist. Whether we should choose for them a certain fixed diet, or whether they should be early accustomed to a variety of food. Whether we should endeavour to preserve them from particular hardships and inconveniences, or, on the contrary, should try to strengthen their constitutions by obliging them to brave such hardships. These, and many other questions, will naturally arise in the mind of a young mother, anxious as to the best way of securing the health of her child; but she generally finds it easier to lay them aside than to answer them: and thus do successive generations hand down to one another their difficulties instead of their experience.

As we approach the moral part of education, we begin to tread upon still more doubtful and uncertain ground. Yet what an inexhaustible fund of knowledge would be obtained by an attentive and judicious study of young children; and how much light might be thrown on many most important questions by a series of careful observations! What curious discoveries would these little creatures afford, on the existence of instinct in man; on the formation of language; in short, on the whole history of the human mind! We must, no doubt, be careful not to form general conclusions

hastily, or from isolated examples: but as every one knows, that by sufficiently multiplying observations, accidental differences disappear, and the peculiar qualities of the individual are lost in the general attributes of the species, experience, on a large scale, would be one of the most efficacious means of instruction.

But though we are not fortunate enough to possess, relative to education, a series of facts systematically observed and arranged, still, from the great mass of information which has been collected on the subject, many valuable hints might be obtained. It is probable, too, that if we were better acquainted with the various modes in which different nations bring up their children, we might be able, in some measure, to account for the diversity of national character; and that the effects which are justly attributed to the difference of climate and race, would appear of little importance when compared with those which depend on education. The great evil is, that we are constantly told of the methods employed, but are left in ignorance as to their results; we are told what has been done, but not whether it has succeeded; nor do we know what the children, thus systematically educated, became, when engaged in active life as men.

Is it then probable that education can ever be raised to the rank of a science, and that when we have examined and methodically ar-

range all the facts which we can obtain respecting children, we shall be able to arrive at some determined results? We cannot answer this question; but we may, at any rate, hope that our difficulties and uncertainty will be greatly lessened. *Private* education must ever remain a mere art; that is to say, a collection of means, to be used according to the skill and judgment of individuals. The practice of this art can never be taught by books; and its most powerful weapons will always consist in the influence which man exercises over man; and in the power he possesses of making himself loved and obeyed, and of gaining an ascendancy over the minds of his fellow-creatures. But even an art must have some fixed principles; and *public* education may become something much more certain than an art. Here there is more room for methodical arrangement: individual differences disappear in the general mass, and the working of the machine does not depend entirely either on the pupil upon whom it acts, or on the master who regulates its movements. Many more experiments, however, must be made, before such an important instrument is brought to perfection.

We have then two different subjects for our observation; private and public education. In the former, children must be studied individually and separately; in the latter, collected together

in such numbers as to exercise a mutual influence on each other ; so that, by a kind of moral fermentation, the constituent parts of their several dispositions are combined in a new and peculiar manner in each individual.

The study of every single child must begin from its very birth, and on that account a mother only can carry it on successfully. She is particularly fitted for this duty, both by her position with regard to her child, and by the peculiar qualities of her sex ; for without that pliability of disposition, which is one of the characteristics of a woman's nature, she could not follow these little beings in their perpetual variations of disposition. Such a study cannot be completed in a single examination : we can never perfectly understand these young creatures, unless we possess that versatility of imagination which will enable us to embody ourselves in them, — to be at the same time ourselves and another. Above all, if we would perfectly know and comprehend them, we must love them ; the heart has more to do with this knowledge than the head. Yet we must not be content with merely following the course of their feelings, and living, as it were, in them ; for then every impression would be easily effaced : by constantly sympathising with them, we should become as inconstant and trifling as they are,

and the prescribed task of studying them would be forgotten.

But in order that this task may be properly fulfilled, I would earnestly exhort all young mothers to keep a journal in which the gradual progress and unfolding of their children's minds may be regularly noted down. Even if they have no general views in so doing, they will derive much advantage from it; their ideas will become more collected, their plans more determined, and they will acquire a habit of thoroughly examining and endeavouring to understand whatever occurs to excite their attention.

In a very valuable work by M. Guizot, *Les Annales d'Education*, there are some passages which afford us an excellent specimen of the art of observing children, and of tracing their actions to their true causes; they are given in the form of a journal, and we obtain from them the result of many important and useful observations.* The talent displayed in them is even more than necessary for the purpose; but in order to make it exactly what it should be, some improvement might be made in the *form*. I

* Most of these observations have been republished in the *Lettres sur l'Education Domestique*, an excellent work by Madame Guizot, which obtained the prize awarded by the Académie Française. — *Note by the Author.*

would have it a true journal, in which an account should be kept of every successive step made by the child; where every vicissitude in its health, whether mental or physical, should be registered, and where the *measure* of the child, in every meaning of the word, as taken at different periods of his age, should be noted down. Words, ideas, knowledge, feelings,—every thing, in short, which is either naturally unfolded in the mind, or acquired by education,—should be here recorded; together with the first appearance of every endowment and every defect; the original source of which would thus be open to our consideration. And as we cannot describe a child without relating his history, such a journal would be enlivened by the little incidents of each day, and the joys and sorrows peculiar to his age; nor would it be long before the task of keeping it would become to the mother the most interesting of employments. She would feel that she was securing to herself for the future the recollection of this most fascinating age: and how delightful would it be, thus to fix the fugitive image of infancy, to prolong to an indefinite period the happiness of beholding its charms, and to have the power of reviving at any time a representation of these much-loved objects, which, even supposing their lives to be spared, must be lost to us in their character of children!

But how much greater and more important would such a work become, if undertaken by the heads of any of our public seminaries; for they alone have the opportunity of seeing children collectively, and judging of their general characteristics. By a regular examination of the effect of their methods, a continual principle of improvement would be afforded; and the action of such a principle is necessary in all such institutions; not only to counteract that spirit of indolence which would lead both master and scholars to pass over real difficulties, and content themselves with the appearance of having conquered them; but to keep the pupils up to the level of that rapid progress and diffusion of knowledge which requires a proportional improvement in every branch of instruction. And when, on the comparison of different experiments, particular methods are decidedly abandoned, we may hope that others, giving an entirely new character to education, will be suggested.

Numerous as are the establishments for education in Europe, all of them, till very lately, had been formed so much on the same plan, that it was difficult to make any comparison as to their merits, except such as arose from the comparative ability of their different masters; and by this, of course, no light was thrown on the general subject. But when institutions founded

on entirely new principles, such as those of Pestalozzi, Fellenberg, and Père Girard, in Switzerland, and Hazlewood school, in England *, become more common, some progress will be made towards solving the more important questions in education. We shall then learn, for example, whether the use of emulation, the moral influence of which is so justly dreaded by many conscientious parents, is absolutely necessary for the complete development of the powers of the mind. We shall learn whether it may not be possible to take advantage of the happy effect of example, without fostering the dangerous spirit of rivalry. And we may, perhaps, also learn to pay more attention to the culture of the feelings and the understanding. The success of the plan of mutual instruction gives some idea of what may yet be discovered, or improved, in the art of teaching ; and much light has been thrown on a more important branch of education—the formation of the character—by the infant schools which have been recently established. When we see in one of these schools above a hundred children, from two to six years old, acquiring habits of order and regularity, receiving the first elements of instruction, and pursuing their

* To this many others in England might now be added. — *Translator.*

lessons, or their amusements, without a tear, an angry tone, or a quarrel, constantly happy and cheerful, we cannot but feel astonished at the extraordinary effect produced by such simple means; and wonder how it has happened that ages should have elapsed before recourse was had to such methods.

It must, however, be allowed, that it will always be difficult to draw an exact comparison between different modes of education. In order to accomplish this, it would be necessary, not only that those who devote themselves to the subject should submit their attempts to a regular examination, the result of which should be made public; but also that they should watch over the conduct of their pupils after their education is finished, and thus judge of its success by their future life. Such investigations are necessarily of so delicate a nature, and, in order to be conclusive, must be so numerous, that it is hardly to be expected that a sufficient number of persons would ever be found, willing and able to undertake them.

Yet what can escape the investigating spirit of this age? And when we hear of so many noble undertakings in favour of religion and humanity, may we not hope that some association will be formed for solving, by a series of facts, the great problems relating to education? A more important subject can never be presented to the

consideration of mankind; for in nothing do we find the power of one mind over another — of the present over the future — so conspicuously exhibited as in the influence of education.

Amongst the various obstacles to the progress of education, there is one which proceeds from a scruple that we cannot but respect. Parents fear to run the risk of trying any new experiment; and feel as if it were their duty to persevere in that plan which has always been supposed to be the best. But it should be remembered, that these suppositions are not without risk of error; and the important thing is, not what is supposed to be, but what really is, the best. No doubt there are some experiments so hazardous that we must not allow ourselves to venture on them. But, having put aside all that can reasonably inspire us with distrust, we must then fearlessly and directly seek after the truth.

By thus referring to the experience of futurity, I acknowledge how little dependence I have on my own; limited indeed and imperfect as it is, I scarcely dare venture to bring it forward. But if I cannot produce many facts, I may, at all events, have the merit of raising doubts; I may point out uncertainties, and propose difficulties. In the present state of our knowledge on this subject, perhaps the most useful work on

education would be a series of explanatory questions, to which answers might be furnished, within the next fifty years, by those enlightened minds who devote their attention to this most important subject.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH, AND FIRST WORDS.

BIRTH and death, notwithstanding their daily occurrence in the course of nature, are two events which never fail to excite our wonder. The arrival and the departure of a human being speak to us of two unknown worlds, to which they seem to approximate our own. Yet the interest which we take in these two events is very different. We associate ourselves closely with the dying; we suffer with them; we tremble with them; feeling that the time will soon come when we must submit to the same fate; but the new-born infant is, as it were, a stranger to us. The sight of it may affect us with emotion, but we do not sympathize with it as with the dying. The time when we bore some resemblance to it is long since passed away, and has ceased to interest us. What does not affect us either with hopes or fears for ourselves, seems to us of trifling importance.

It has often been remarked, that suffering introduces a man into the world, and accom-

panies him out of it. What a crowd of tumultuous impressions must rush on a sensitive being at its first entrance into life ! The air, like a rapid torrent, forces itself into the lungs of the infant, and excites them to action ; the light, piercing through the transparent veil which covers the eyes, dazzles its sight ; and though some have thought that a new-born child does not hear, we can hardly imagine that it is deaf to its own cries. The mysterious moment of birth, which plunges the soul into the whirlpool of life, overwhelms the infant with suffering and confusion. But a kind of quiet stupor, or a peaceful slumber, very soon rescues it from impressions, as yet too painful for its weak organs.

Some time elapses before the mind begins to know, or comprehend any thing. All the movements of an infant are what may be called convulsive and involuntary ; every thing depends on its internal sensations. One action alone seems to have an object, that of turning its mouth as if to seek for food, and sucking what is offered to it ; no other proof of instinct can yet be observed. In about a week after birth, however, we remark that its eyes follow the light ; it begins to see ; and it certainly hears now, for sudden noises make it start ; still, however, it exists in a solitary state, and enters into no connection with the world in which it lives ; yet, from this period, I am not disposed to consider

the infant so destitute of instinct as it is generally imagined; many of its actions cannot be explained by referring them to sensation or experience. Such are, for instance, the proofs which it begins to give of the first dawning of its affections. At six weeks old, the child is yet a stranger in this world; nothing exists distinctly in its mind; it has not yet found out that the objects which it sees are the same as those which it touches; and whatever impression these objects may have made on its senses, it makes no effort either to obtain or to avoid them. But even now, though its senses are far from being fully developed, it is interested by the human face; and before its attention can be attracted by any material object, it is excited by sympathy. A look of affection—a caressing tone—will win a smile from its lips; gentle emotions evidently animate the little creature, and we recognise with delight the expression of these emotions on its countenance.

But how, then, has the infant learnt that such an expression of countenance indicates affection? Knowing nothing of the expression of its own face, how could it imitate that of another, unless a corresponding feeling had imprinted the same character on its features? We cannot account for this by referring it to the senses. The person leaning over its cradle may not be its nurse; she

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may perhaps have disturbed it, or even made it submit to some troublesome, though necessary, arrangements ; but this is of no consequence : she has smiled upon it, — the little creature has felt that it is loved, and loves again in return.

Is not this to be referred to instinct? Does it not spring from the same cause, though producing an opposite effect, as that inexplicable presentiment, which makes the frightened hen fly at the sight of a scarcely visible dark speck in the sky? She has never seen a hawk, yet foresees cruelty and murder ; and the infant, though unable to distinguish and understand, from a similar instinct, foresees kindness and love.

We are sometimes astonished by the slow progress at first made by the young of our own species, because we are accustomed to compare it with that made by the young of other animals. But if we do not allow that an infant is in any degree guided by instinct, our astonishment ought rather to be excited by the rapidity of its progress. When we recollect that six months elapsed before the young man who had been born blind, and was couched by Cheselden, could guide himself, after he was restored to sight ; and that even after that time he was continually making mistakes ; and when we recollect, too, that he was assisted by the other four senses, and the analogy existing amongst them ; and directed by a reason already matured, and by friends

who instructed him how to use his newly acquired organ — can we doubt that a new-born child must receive some peculiar assistance by which it is enabled to enter on the exercise of its senses? The infant is comparatively farther advanced than the blind youth. Though ignorant that it has an apprenticeship to serve, in order to learn how the organs with which it is endowed are to be used, it does in fact serve this apprenticeship to all the five senses at the same time. As we know that it is by means of feeling that we rectify the errors of our vision, the young man was, no doubt, taught that he might recognise the forms of every thing he saw by touching them; but, with the infant, such an exercise must be the work of chance; and cannot occur at all, till it has begun to attempt to reach and touch things; which it seldom does before the fifth or sixth month. Yet very soon after this time, at about eight or nine months old, it has become so skilful in this respect, that it is hardly ever deceived as to the distance of objects within its reach. And how many and how various must the ideas be, which it has acquired in this time; even before it is able, by the help of language, to enrich itself with those of others! And how wonderful is the facility with which it afterwards renders itself master of this help! A person of the lower orders (whose vocabulary is often not much more copious than that of a child of three

years old), if he were removed to a foreign country, would employ at least as long a time in mastering a new language; and yet, what great advantages would he possess in a thousand respects over the infant! He is already familiar with common objects; he knows the purposes of language, and the general structure of it, and has a desire to learn; while the infant has no wish or thoughts on the subject.

If then the child, during its apprenticeship, makes as much progress in acquiring the use of all his faculties, as a man does in gaining that of one, may we not conclude that there exists in his favour a special dispensation? that is to say, that he possesses an unknown source of knowledge; or, in fact, what is called instinct.

We think and speak too much of experience; it accounts, indeed, for some effects, but not for all. Its influence is no doubt one which is continually increasing; but in early infancy it is chiefly remarkable for its slowness and uncertainty; and, in such things as come under its province, we see children continually repeating the same trials and the same errors. They must have seen a hundred times that, in order to make an object stand up, it must be placed on its end; yet they almost always lay it on its side. And they will go on for months spilling water out of a cup, before they learn that, in order to

avoid this, the cup must be held horizontally. It is seldom that any association of ideas is formed in their minds, unless their feelings are excited; on any subject which does not interest their childish passions, experience is of little use to them.

Five or six months pass away before the infant has any idea of using his hands. Their destination is as yet unknown to him, and the tardiness with which the discovery is made, proves that it is the slow result of experience. Long before this time he looks at objects, and shows an interest in people; and thus appears to have received more immediately the use of the organ of sight. But we may easily observe the progress of experience in the manner in which he learns to use the sense of feeling. This has, indeed, for some time been exercised involuntarily, but it is long in being subjected to the will; it must be roused into action by the sight; and the two senses are afterwards of mutual assistance to each other.

Let us consider how this is accomplished. As soon as an infant is able to observe at all, he begins to feel amusement. At first his smiles are excited only by the faces around him; but in a little while he begins to appear pleased with every thing which attracts his sight. The pleasure of looking at any thing bright and shining excites his feelings; he flutters in his

nurse's arms, stretches out his hands, and often accidentally touches the object of his attention. This occasions an unexpected sensation; he is astonished to meet with an obstacle which arrests his movements; but, after finding for some time that the recurrence of the same cause always produces the same effect, he learns to foresee the consequence of his own motions. Then he begins to stretch out his little hands intentionally; though, as he is not yet able to calculate distances, it is still a chance whether he reaches the desired object. By constant practice he becomes indeed more skilful; but it is seldom that an infant is able to touch any object with certainty before he is seven or eight months old.

When the sensations cease to be unassociated, when the senses of sight and touch concur in giving to the infant the idea of an object, he begins to assign most of his impressions to their true causes, and may then be said to have stepped over the threshold of life. The external world appears under its real form, and his progress in intelligence becomes more and more rapid; he has already made his first attempts in a language which it would be interesting to study.

At six weeks old, when smiles and tears make their appearance, we may often hear an infant utter a gentle murmuring sound. It is the expression of satisfaction — of a placid state of

comfort. By degrees these sounds become more varied; they seem to be an exercise of the voice; a sort of purring noise with which the infant amuses himself — perhaps a confused imitation of the sounds he hears around him. Not yet able to distinguish inanimate from living objects, these soft murmurs are sometimes addressed to a bright metal button; sometimes to a mirror lighted up by the rays of the sun; he seems to tell them how beautiful they are, and how much pleasure they afford to his newly awakened sight; sometimes he utters shrill, but joyful screams, as if to attract their attention. Still, however, there is no real language; at least if we understand by language a means, voluntarily employed, of exercising influence. The infant asks for nothing, calls for no one, and expects no effect to be produced by his tones.

Cries are the true language of infancy. At first they are uttered instinctively, in obedience to that law of nature, which impels us to pour out our sorrows in this manner. But when these sorrows have been often relieved, and this expression of them has become associated in the mind of the infant with the idea of that relief, it then becomes a real language. In the same manner have his animated gestures, and the action of stretching himself towards the object of his wishes, been at first involuntary, and afterwards become intentional; the transition from

one of these states to the other would be an interesting subject for observation.

The first words of children are, however, quite a different thing: while pronouncing them they are amusing themselves by the exercise of a particular faculty, that of attaching a vocal sign to an object; and they do this without being excited by any desire or any passion. If they see a dog, they directly call out its name (at least as near an attempt at it as they are able to articulate); but they do it merely for amusement, without any other motive, and without any feelings either of hope or fear. Were they afraid of the dog, they would scream out; did they want to see it nearer, they would stretch themselves towards it, and utter tones of impatience. But it is only in a state of tranquillity that they pronounce its name; the moment they are excited by any emotion, they leave off using words, which are to them a new and superfluous acquisition, and return to their true language — cries and gesticulations. Words are to them at present an instrument of which they have still to learn the true use.

When nearly a year old, children begin to venture on their first tottering steps, and to lisp their first broken words. Dependent on all around for assistance, they possess, in a less degree than any other animal of the same age, the means of providing for their own safety; and

yet they already display the two great prerogatives of their nature, by which they will hereafter be raised far above all these animals. One of these—the faculty to which I have just alluded, of distinguishing objects by conventional signs—has often been noticed; but the other, which displays itself much sooner, and seems to me well worthy of observation, has not often been remarked. I refer to that disposition to interest themselves in a multitude of objects entirely unconnected with any instinct of self-preservation, which is so often manifested by very young children. A child of six months old no longer lives entirely concentrated in himself: his young existence already diffuses itself around; his mind already begins to form those extended relations which will, at no very distant period, place the material world under his dominion; and to throw out those lines which will finally bring every thing within his reach. The most intelligent of the brute creation possess at best but a very confined range of interests; every thing is indifferent to them which has no connection with either their safety or their subsistence; they like, but they do not admire; they have no curiosity. Children, on the contrary, find amusement in every thing; they have already pleasures which, as they are not merely animal in their nature, may be termed disinterested. Beauty already exists for them: their eyes, sparkling with admiration, proclaim its presence; and though not

yet able to distinguish what is hurtful from what is useful, their little voices burst forth in exclamations of praise.

We may also observe that children derive great enjoyment from the sense of hearing: almost any noise pleases them, but music particularly delights them. It is not improbable that, by placing them frequently under the influence of harmonious sounds, we might spare ourselves much of that trouble which we so often laboriously take at a later age in order to improve their taste for music. This much at least is certain, that in families where music is habitually cultivated, new pupils are trained with the greatest facility. We may even presume that the striking differences which are observed in the musical talents of neighbouring nations (as for instance in the inhabitants of the two opposite banks of the Rhine), are only the consequences of early impressions. Singing — that powerful resource in soothing the pains and griefs of infancy — might thus be made the means of fostering the germ of a charming talent; one which we are too apt to consider merely as an art, without properly appreciating its moral influence, of which the ancients seem to have been so justly aware.

The intellectual education of an infant can at first consist only in a preparation for the future exercise of the reason. Here the great

art is, to excite such an interest as may fix in the mind perceptions naturally transitory and fugitive; and to collect, and engrave on the memory, facts which may hereafter furnish points of comparison for the judgment. But facts cannot be impressed on the memory unless attention is given to them: the want of this attention, and the uncertainty thence arising in the mind, are the obstacles with which an instructor has most frequently to struggle. This would not be so generally the case, if the first impressions of children were clear and distinct. As soon, therefore, as we perceive their attention fixed on any object, we should carefully avoid disturbing them; every thing which excites their interest, or becomes the subject of their observation, assists in the developement of their intellect. At the same time we must also be careful not to increase too much the intensity of simple material sensations: by over exciting the feeble organs of children, we astound or stupify them; thus, shaking them violently, jumping them on the knee, or striking loudly on the table or window, are but so many rude and mechanical means, which cause the suspension of their cries only by paralysing their senses. A much better plan is to endeavour, as much as we can, to turn their attention from their own little griefs, by bringing into action their feelings or their

intelligence. Caress a dog or a cat before them, and you excite that sympathy which the youngest children always feel for animals. Show them some beautiful object, and make them examine it carefully; you will at once strengthen their attention, and awaken the feeling of admiration, one of the finest emotions of the mind. Give them engravings, or models of figures to look at, and you excite their imagination; in short, there are innumerable ways of rousing the awakening faculties. To vary, in moderation, the sensations of children, and to associate with these, as much as possible, the exercise of their moral feelings, forms, at this early age, the education of the intellect. There is, besides, an education of the heart; with which it is even more necessary that we should occupy ourselves as soon as possible, as the success of it depends on dispositions still more transitory and evanescent.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS TO BE CULTIVATED DURING
THE FIRST YEAR OF INFANCY.

To cultivate good dispositions, to give them that stability and permanence which may entitle them to the name of qualities, and to raise these qualities to the rank of virtues by stamping them with the sacred seal of religion, — such is the gradual progress of a good education, as it respects the formation of character.

In the first stage of infancy, our concern is with the dispositions alone; there are some which may be cherished at an age when it is not yet possible to repress any. Indeed, at every age, our best method of stifling or weakening evil inclinations is, to encourage the continual exercise of those that are good. The great secret of education is contained in that admirable precept of the Gospel, “overcome evil with good.”

In order fully to understand the importance of the first year of a child's existence, both the power of education, and the limits of that power,

should be taken into consideration. The effect produced by the most anxious care must be limited, because the faculties on which this care is bestowed are in themselves unequal in strength, and therefore not equally capable of improvement. The seeds of all human dispositions have been sown by nature in the mind of the new-born infant, but these seeds do not all possess the same vigour. The feeble wither away and perish, if not favoured by circumstances; while the strong will, if properly nourished, throw out healthy vigorous shoots, and resist the influence even of the most unfavourable circumstances. In every individual the developement of each faculty has an assigned limit, beyond which it cannot pass. To assist the faculties in reaching this boundary, or to prevent their arriving at it, is the business of education; it is, therefore, only their comparative progress that we can influence; yet this alone, did we make use of it properly and at the right moment, would give us immense power.

I am not sure that the first impressions on the mind of an infant are the strongest; the extreme versatility of their disposition would lead me to doubt it; but it is only during the earliest part of their life that we can feel any certainty of making those dispositions, which we are anxious to cultivate, get the start of the others. It is then that we have the greatest

chance of exercising that influence over the relative proportion of the different inclinations, in which consists the art of forming the character.

It is very important to determine beforehand what dispositions we wish to encourage. To leave this entirely to nature, is to allow all the seeds she has sown to spring up by chance. In this consists the evil of that negative education, which has by some been so much extolled. If we consider it a duty to do nothing, and to hinder nothing, in order, as Rousseau says, *that nothing may be done*, habits will be formed before we are aware; unexpected shoots will have been made, which will have overgrown those we had hoped and intended to cultivate; and we shall be obliged so much the sooner to submit to the very necessity from which we had wished to escape — that of using correction and restraint. We shall be obliged to try the painful and uncertain resource of a course of prohibitions. But how much more delightful would it be, to have to do with an education consisting only in encouragement! The necessity of repressing comes always too soon for the mother, and often too late for the child.

Happily we may, even from the earliest infancy, cultivate those dispositions which are unfavourable to the growth of dangerous inclinations. Certain habits, exercising a salutary influence on the moral feelings, may be given

to the infant, even before his character distinctly shows itself. Inward tranquillity will calm the restless activity of his wishes; and the kindness bestowed upon him will direct his attention out of himself, and make him feel kindly towards others. Such dispositions are easily cherished: they may, indeed, be called natural; for all we have to do, is to avoid or to remove whatever would disturb them; and they are both the earliest, and by far the most important, we can cultivate.

Inward tranquillity is produced by outward tranquillity; and for this reason, among many others, infants should, as much as possible, be prevented from crying. It may seem hardly necessary to recommend this to mothers; but even they, perhaps, do not sufficiently attend to the means by which it may be effected; and tears, which have flowed from a definite cause, are even by them too often attributed to chance. Our influence over the dispositions of children begins at such an early age, that we do not always distinguish what is to be attributed to this influence from what is the effect of the constitution of the child. According to Condillac, the great difference between habits and natural inclinations is, that the former *have a beginning*; but it is somewhat difficult to establish this distinction, from the impossibility of ascertaining exactly the commencement of any habits. They

are formed with such astonishing facility, that many are created at a very early age, even by the necessary physical cares bestowed on children, if these are attended to with due regularity. Let two events immediately succeed each other for a few times, and the occurrence of the first will always lead children to expect the second; and in this way do we ourselves cause them a variety both of pains and pleasures. I have said that, in early infancy, the lessons of experience are very slow in their effect, because children are long in drawing such conclusions from the facts they have acquired, as are sufficiently general to act upon in new cases. This is at present an act of judgment beyond their power; but the association of impressions which have followed each other is a mere act of memory; and therefore a connection between them is easily and involuntarily formed in the mind. There are, then, even at the earliest age, many dispositions and feelings which are much more the effect of education than we might at first imagine; so that it becomes very difficult to distinguish accurately those which may be considered as natural.

The safest plan for a watchful mother is always to presume that there is a cause for the infant's tears; and, in endeavouring to ascertain what it is, she will generally find that her child has more reason for his sorrow than she

had previously imagined. These little creatures are not so capricious as is commonly supposed : a hope deceived, a suffering, felt or foreseen, will grieve them. There is almost always a real cause for their complaining.

Many of their little distresses may be avoided by observing as much regularity as possible in the arrangement of their daily life; no one can doubt the utility of habit at this early period. Disappointments are keenly felt by young children, and often prove the source of bitter tears. But if the same impressions constantly succeed each other in the same order, the child feels that his expectation of such as are pleasant will never be disappointed, and he becomes accustomed even to those which are unpleasant. Another frequent cause of tears in children is our allowing them to be too strongly excited ; we should therefore endeavour to preserve them from violent emotions even of pleasure. Hence it is better that they should not see the preparation for their meals. Their desire, sharpened by the sight of the object which is to satisfy it, becomes a painful eagerness : nor does the certainty that this desire will be gratified calm their agitation ; even hope becomes, under such circumstances, a painful rather than a pleasant feeling.

By these and similar attentions, we may keep the minds of children in a state of habitual

tranquillity—an inestimable advantage—easily lost, indeed, but perhaps the quality of all others most necessary to their moral constitution, as yet so weak and vacillating. Their nerves, once agitated, are long in recovering their tone; and both the health and character suffer in consequence. Nor do I dwell on this merely as a means of preventing evil. There is one entire class of qualities—the noblest, perhaps, of any—which will grow and ripen only in the salutary shade of repose; in this class are included not only our virtues, but also our most valuable acquirements. There is nothing worthy of admiration, nothing great in our moral nature, which is not cherished by serenity of mind. Why is it that this disposition, which seems to establish a connection between the soul and heaven,—which can exist only where the heart is at peace with itself and all around it,—is now so rarely to be met with amongst us? And how is it that, when we do meet with it, it is more frequently amongst the simple labourers of the fields, than amongst those who are more highly cultivated? Is it that the nature of man harmonizes more easily with the gentle aspect of the scenery around him, when his social relations are less complicated; and that this harmony is not to be recovered even by the full developement of his mental powers?

However this may be, we shall always find

this happy disposition of mind in young children, unless we ourselves are so unfortunate as to disturb it. It is seen on the open brow, and sparkles with a pure brightness in the eyes of the infant: inspired by this calm serenity, he seems to rejoice in his existence; to breathe, to see, to move his little arms, seem each a source of pleasure to him. He receives with gratitude every thing which nature bestows on him; his young soul seems almost to take wing, and fly to meet her gifts! Oh, let us not venture to interrupt this happy intercourse! Let us not disturb the secret harmony springing up in his young mind! As long as his countenance, beaming with intelligence, proves that his thoughts are occupied, let us be most careful not to interfere with this inward activity; it is more salutary and more genuine than any thing we could substitute.

I have often thought that we are too much accustomed to keep infants constantly in motion. We ought not certainly to allow them to grow weary — ennui is the lethargy of the soul; but nothing is more likely to produce this evil than an excess of variety in our methods of amusing them. The more tranquillity a child has enjoyed in infancy, the more he will possess hereafter; and a calm cheerfulness of disposition may be permanent, which mere gaiety and mirth seldom are. Joy is but a passing guest,

even with children, in this world; she touches it with a flying step: we should always give her a hearty welcome, and at times may even gently invite her presence; but we must be careful not to excite her too much, for tears are apt to follow in her train.

It is for this reason that it is so much more desirable for children to be occupied with things, than with people. As I have before said, the distinction between them is not yet very clear to their eyes; but at any rate things are tranquil objects which do not interest them too eagerly. They try experiments with them unintentionally, and their judgment is ripened by these involuntary observations. When with people, on the contrary, their feelings of sympathy or of dislike are continually excited. The action which living beings use towards each other rouses all their passions; and this action is so much the more animated, as with children there can be no communication of thoughts, and every thing is carried on by means of the feelings. As long as every impulse produces an effect, and obtains an answering attention, every desire will be expressed as soon as conceived; and hence arise the tears and anger which render a perpetual change of scene and posture necessary. An impossibility of fixing their attention on any amusement, or any train of ideas — a fatiguing restlessness — an impatience and in-

ward inquietude, which are always injurious — a state of irritability, prejudicial to the health; — such are the effects of the too constant influence which we both exercise on these little creatures ourselves, and allow them to exercise on us.

An infant of six months old, half lying, half sitting, in its cradle, and playing with its little hands, is in the happiest state possible. So is it also when, a few months older, it is seated on the carpet, amusing itself with scattering its playthings about, and then trying to collect them together again. While thus playing by itself you may go on with your own occupations; a look, a word, a little occasional notice, are sufficient to show that it is not forgotten, and to make it feel perfectly secure. But never let this feeling of security be deceived: if it should hurt itself, or even if its spirits should begin to fail, and should no longer be excited by the objects around, go to it; yet even then, do not hurry; try gently to exercise its patience; try to make it understand the simple word, "*wait*." If the promise herein implied be always faithfully kept, this word will soon become an important one; the infant will understand that you mean to assist it, but that you are yourself at the moment occupied. It will understand that it must *receive* but not *exact*; and it will become only the more loving and the more grateful.

M. Friedlander, a skilful German physician, was struck, when in France, by observing how much it was the custom to keep infants constantly amused. "It appears to me," says he, "that the French mothers are too lively with their children in early infancy, and thus excite their vivacity too much and too soon. In Germany, on the contrary, we continually hear mothers exhorting their children to be still and quiet."

How many reflections are suggested by this simple remark! Who can say what effect may not be produced on the future character by this difference of treatment? Who can say that the decided preponderance of the active faculties in the one nation, and of the reflecting faculties in the other, may not be referred to this cause? A cause too, which, in different ways, continues to be called into action during the whole course of education. Are we sufficiently aware what we are doing, when we thus accelerate the progress of one part of the moral constitution, in proportion as we retard that of another? Can we tell how far the faculties, thus left behind, may not be necessary, both on their own account, and as a counterpoise to the others? It is, no doubt, difficult to exercise, at our pleasure, those faculties which are purely passive or reflective; but still these must have space and tranquillity for their developement.

There are, it must be allowed, times of illness and suffering, when we are obliged to amuse infants, and for that purpose to keep them more constantly in motion. But, though the best plans may be thus for a season counteracted, we need not lose sight of them. A mother may easily acquire the art of playfully breaking off a habit, and take advantage of a favourable opportunity to recommence her plans.

Benevolence, a precious disposition, which we cannot too sedulously cultivate, naturally arises from tranquillity of mind. When a young child is in a perfectly healthy state, so that his feeling of existence is at the same time animated and yet calm, all his natural sympathies are in action. An irresistible charm draws him to his fellow-creatures; the bonds of a common nature knit his soul to theirs. We are formed by our Creator for attachment to each other; for deriving pleasure from mutual intercourse: the gift of language would alone be sufficient to prove this. To love, is the highest pleasure which this life can afford, and will constitute our portion and reward in eternity. By opening the hearts of our children to those sweet affections, which will embellish their existence both here and hereafter, we are but fulfilling a sacred duty, and following the direction of Providence. And though, in this world, too keen

a sensibility may occasionally be a source of pain, and, when centred exclusively on one object, may cost its possessor many tears, the chastened feeling of benevolence will, by diffusing it more widely, moderate its excess.

We are not, perhaps, sufficiently impressed with the value of a benevolent disposition ; our attention is rather attracted to the pleasure of being its object, than to that of exercising it ourselves. Yet, he who possesses it, is happy beyond all others ; and the expression of this happiness is constantly seen in his countenance. Many systems of education, apparently very carefully conducted, are yet remarkably deficient in this point. Why do we take so little pains to cultivate a disposition which removes so many difficulties, which so constantly gains all hearts, which will be of more use than any "rules of politeness," however multiplied, and which will prepare children for that Christian charity, in which consists the true spirit of our duty towards our fellow-creatures ?

The fact is, that we never think of cultivating it at all ; if by chance it exists, it is because we have allowed it to grow, not because we have endeavoured to promote its growth. We are fonder of prescribing than of inspiring ; instead of cultivating feelings, we inculcate precepts ; and thus our dry system of education is reduced to the art of prevention. Yet this art is of itself

quite insufficient. Our prohibitions are at the same time too numerous to be observed, and too few to be applied to every fault. We wish, no doubt, that our children should not be liable to fits of passion or ill humour; but, as the number of blameable actions is perfectly indefinite, we cannot, by especial prohibitions, provide against them all. Our aim, therefore, must be to influence the motives of children. At every age it is on the heart alone that any salutary effect can be produced; and at this early period it is only by sympathy that we can influence the heart. But as the natural effect of sympathy is to produce a desire of imitation, and as this desire may lead to good or ill, according to the direction it receives, it is of the utmost consequence that the child should be placed under the influence of gentle feelings, and sheltered from those which are harsh or unkind.

With regard to this last point, indeed, mothers have been sufficiently warned. All who have reflected on the subject of education have felt the extreme importance of guarding an infant from any impatient or angry treatment; from a sharp tone, or even a cross look. "A nurse," says Mr. Edgeworth, "may influence the character of a child for life." Children receive impressions with astonishing facility, even before they can understand what has caused them.

Long before they comprehend words, they read the countenance ; and mothers may hence learn that they possess in this instinctive sympathy a means of influencing beings not yet endowed with reason. By surrounding children with cheerful faces, by letting them constantly hear expressions of gentleness and love, we may soon inspire them with affectionate feelings.

Although the best means of cultivating good dispositions may seem well understood, and I have myself dwelt on the subject in this chapter, I shall conclude it with a brief recapitulation of them. Our first object should be to cultivate that happy mixture of tranquillity and enjoyment, which we have called serenity of mind : this is to be accomplished by keeping every thing about the child in a state of peace and quietness ; and by surrounding him, as much as possible, with agreeable and soothing objects. The next thing is to place about him only such persons as really possess those dispositions which we are anxious to encourage in him. I say *really possess them*, because in this case affectation is perfectly useless : the coldness with which children receive any false demonstration of kindness, is equalled only by their sympathy with every true and natural feeling. In the last place, when the disposition we wish to cultivate is capable of being displayed by actions, (as benevolence, for instance, or affection) we should endeavour to

fix it in the child's mind by giving him an opportunity of bringing the feeling into action.

This last means, however, though a most powerful one, must be used with great discretion, or it may produce an effect exactly opposite to what we intend. If, for example, we wish to accustom a child to a stranger, whose face has at first perhaps caused it some alarm, the new comer must remove to a little distance: if he then assume a cheerful countenance, and court a smile from the child, we shall see its little face clear up, though still perhaps with some traces of its recent fear. If the nurse be judicious, and does not hurry matters, but lets the necessary gradual advances be made, it will soon be playing in the arms of the dreaded stranger. But if, on the contrary, she seizes its little hand, and places it immediately in that of the unknown person, loud screams will be the consequence, and it will be long before the child sees him without fear and dislike. By thus harshly checking an incipient feeling, she will have excited hatred, instead of love.

Such examples are constantly occurring in the course of education; and, by attending to our own feelings, we shall find how often such instances occur also in after life. The attentive observation of these young hearts gives us more insight into our own than we should at first

suppose. We recognise in them all our involuntary emotions, all our first impressions. Imagination is ever youthful, and the child always lives in the man, though the whole man does not exist in the child.

CHAPTER IV.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
SECOND YEAR.

SOME months elapse after children have begun to speak, before they make much progress in the real use of language. They are, indeed, continually learning new words: but, as long as these remain scattered and unconnected in their minds, the acquisition of them seems neither to depend upon, nor to influence, their moral developement. Yet this developement advances rapidly; and, could the progress which children make in intelligence be accurately estimated, the very first steps in this progress would perhaps appear the most wonderful. It requires a strong effort to enable the young faculties to spring over that wide interval which separates the entirely sensitive life of a young infant from the intellectual one of a man. At the age which we are now considering, this effort has not yet been made; but it is on the point of being attempted. Desires, affections, pains, pleasures, — all are alive and active in the child: he already resembles

us in many things ; but he differs from us in one very important respect ; for he is not yet able to express his thoughts or feelings in words. We can hardly conceive such an existence : language is so familiar to us, so completely a part of ourselves, that we cannot picture to our minds what we should be without it. Man is, according to the Hebrew expression, “ a speaking soul ; ” but it is not so with children and brute animals : in their minds the things themselves, and not the words which are the emblems of them, are represented. Every thing is there depicted as in a painting ; or rather a scenic representation takes place, where what has passed in real life is in part acted over again. At this early age, when the progress made by the mind depends almost entirely on the various emotions and impressions which it receives, children seem endowed with a singular avidity for seeking and multiplying these impressions ; and every thing which appears likely to renew them, affords them pleasure. If they wish to go out, we see them eagerly stretching themselves towards the door, and transported with delight at the mere sight of their hat or cloak : if they wish to ride in the carriage, they struggle in the nurse’s arms till it is almost impossible to hold them. Every thing within and around them seems full of enjoyment. They are excited not only by present objects, but frequently by

the ideal representation of them. If their minds are occupied by any earnest desire, all their other sensations are for the time suspended, and we try in vain to attract their attention; they see nothing, hear nothing: their whole soul is absorbed by the image of the object on which their wishes are fixed. Even when not under the influence of any very strong present emotion, the scenes which they have previously witnessed will again excite and agitate their imagination. It is well known how much more difficult it is to get children to sleep at night, if they have been much amused during the day; their eyes sparkle with a vivid brightness; their cheeks are flushed; their faculties — having no doubt been too much excited — are still in such a state of activity, that neither silence nor darkness seem to weary them, or tempt them to repose.

These effects of the vivacity of sensations in very young children are easily understood; but, when we see how readily these little creatures pass from a mere sensitive existence into the moral world, we find fresh cause for admiration. Inexplicable effects are produced on them by causes not at all of a physical character, and whose action presumes an advance of intellect far beyond their powers: our impressions, our feelings, are transmitted to them by signs so slight and so uncertain, that it is wonderful how they can understand them. This does not in-

deed surprise those who, thinking little on the subject, consider it only natural that children should be like ourselves; and it has been little noticed even by those who devote themselves to the investigation of causes.

Of course, if we refer it to instinct, we must be content to rest there, without gaining any more knowledge on this mysterious subject; yet it is only to instinct that it can be referred. The same faculty which we remarked at six weeks old, has in the course of the first year made great progress. At this age, an intelligent child will read the expression of our feelings on our countenance: we may see reflected on his little face every shade of our own humour: he knows not whence these changes in our disposition arise, but he partakes in them; and though ignorant of the cause, sympathizes in the effect. Not that he is distressed at what gives us pain, or that he rejoices in what gives us pleasure: he does not as yet imagine his own existence to be distinct from ours; he lives in us, and feels with us, by a kind of necessity. He is a living mirror, in which the state of our own moral feelings is reflected with astonishing accuracy.

Even at an earlier age, I have myself witnessed a scene, which was a striking illustration of what has just been remarked. An infant of nine months old was playing merrily on its mother's lap, when a lady entered the

room, whose countenance, though calm, wore an expression of deep sorrow. The child, who had seen her before, but without any particular interest, fixed its attention on her face. By degrees its little countenance became clouded over, its playthings fell from its hands, and at last it burst into tears, and hid its face on its mother's neck. This was not the effect of fear, or pity, or commiseration; the little creature felt distressed, and relieved its distress by tears. On the same principle, a child of fifteen or sixteen months old, who is present during any serious reading, and sees on every countenance an expression of grave attention, soon experiences a certain feeling of veneration or respect; and if the trial be not continued too long, it will produce the same effect at every future repetition. Hence a feeling of religion, which at first sight might appear too exalted in its nature to be felt by an infant, may spring up in its mind at a very early age. An impression, at first, indeed, without any definite object, and yet in some degree analogous to that solemn emotion which true piety produces, is communicated by sympathy to the child. He feels that he is entering on holy ground; the idea of something sacred is by degrees introduced into his heart; and when, at a future period, God is named to him as the invisible object of our eternal adoration, he is not astonished at the

idea of an invisible Being; he has already, in some degree, felt the imposing effect of his presence.

Such impressions are, no doubt, very transient. They are modifications as fugitive as shadows; but the more frequently they are repeated, the more easily will they be produced; and, in a short time, dispositions will arise which may easily be encouraged and cultivated.

There are a multitude of emotions, feelings, and impressions, which, though they may in some measure be reckoned natural, are yet communicated by our means to children. The germ of them is certainly already implanted in the mind; they could not so easily be brought into action, if there were not a predisposition to be acted upon; but this disposition might remain dormant and inactive. At all events, those impulses which are sure to arise, even without any external influence, should be carefully distinguished from those, whose activity may be almost indefinitely delayed. Thus, impatience in infants, loud crying, resistance, accompanied by screams and violent gestures, are unavoidable; but the desire of revenge is not so: they do not always wish to make others suffer, because they have suffered themselves. When they strike at random with their hands, they have no intention of hurting any one, unless they have at any time seen this intention

displayed by another. Such, at least, is the result of my own experience on the subject; but more exact observation is necessary, in order to confirm this opinion.

The unreasonable fears so often felt by children are generally the effect of example. This is remarked by Rousseau, who, though sometimes a dangerous guide, is often an excellent observer. He advises us to accustom children from their very infancy to the sight of ugly and disagreeable-looking animals. At that age they have little idea of danger, and are more apt to feel dislike than fear. Their dislike most commonly arises from surprise at some unexpected or striking object; for example, a child will in general turn away from a person dressed in black; but if he have been brought up in a family who happened to be in mourning, he will be sociable with a person in this dress, and shy with one in a gayer attire; just as the children in Africa are alarmed at the sight of a white man.*

* Children should very early be accustomed to darkness, before they can have learnt to be afraid of it, but they should never be allowed to associate any idea of desertion or distress with night; and, therefore, if at any time left in the dark, their slightest call should be attended to: whilst quite infants, when, of course, they are never left alone, the example of gaiety in those around them soon renders them perfectly easy under the deprivation of light.

Even in infancy, children have great pleasure in exercising influence. They expect constant sympathy from us, and are annoyed when it is refused; and if our refusal be accompanied by ridicule, which is a sort of insult, they are mortified and humbled. Any want of harmony between their feelings and ours is painful to them; and they are therefore continually seeking for our approbation. If they have once made us laugh, by some amusing little antic, they will go on repeating it for a length of time, and feel hurt, if we do not continue to be entertained. When we do not immediately give them what they wish for, they are, perhaps, more mortified at the refusal to oblige them, than at the privation itself; and their wounded pride will often lead them to disdain a tardy compliance with their wishes; they will reject with contempt the very thing they had desired, and by their pouting lips, averted eyes, and frowning brow, display their feeling of ill humour.

On this account we should not, from a false idea of hardening children against pain, refuse them a proper degree of pity, when they are in distress. Nor, on the other hand, should we diminish their strength of mind by too much caressing, especially if they themselves seem disposed to bear any little misfortune with good humour. But when really ill, or in trouble, we should show that we feel for them; otherwise we

run the risk of hardening their hearts, and they will learn to treat the sufferings of others with the same indifference which they have themselves experienced. Besides, it is easier to revive their spirits, if we have first shown that we are sorry for them.

From sympathy arises, as we have before stated, the desire of imitation : after *feeling* with us, children naturally desire to *act* with us. They conclude that they shall be able to do whatever they have seen us do ; and their first attempts, so gracefully awkward, afford us much amusement. But when we make that a subject of joke, which in the child was an earnest and serious object of interest, we run great risk of making him affected. Attempts at imitation become premeditated and unnatural, when they are continued with a view to amuse us. For instance, a mother receives a letter, and reads some parts aloud to those around her, without any idea that her child is attending to her ; Presently, however, he seizes hold of the first piece of paper within his reach, raises it up to his face, and utters at random any words he happens to recollect, connecting them by a sort of murmuring noise, like that of talking. If those who are present begin to laugh, he does interrupt his mock reading. A stolen glance at his mother, shows a comic struggle in the little creature, between that gravity which he keeps

up as an actor, and the gaiety around him, in which he participates. Animated, however, by success, he plays his part with more and more extravagance, till it degenerates at last into mere buffoonery, for the entertainment of the bystanders. But this was far from being the case at first : instead of any thing like a joke, the child considered himself as employed in a perfectly serious occupation.

It is but too true, that the notice we bestow on children corrupts their simplicity, by making them associate with their original impressions the idea of the effect they will produce on us ; and such scenes as the one above mentioned, and a thousand others, which I could relate, (and I mention none which have not really occurred), show what keen observation even infants possess. Where can they have obtained this knowledge of human nature, this taste for humour, this consciousness of being distinguished, which thus fills their young breasts ? The sympathetic intelligence with which they are endowed, is, no doubt, very different from that reasoning intelligence which is obtained through the medium of words ; but if the former had not pre-existed, all words expressive of the feelings, the affections, or of moral ideas, would long have remained unintelligible to children.

It is not impossible that inward feelings may

sometimes be formed in the mind of a child by outward actions. He sees an action which he imitates, accompanied by a certain expression of countenance, which he imitates also ; and before long a light seems to dawn upon his soul. He becomes grave by imitating seriousness ; tender by imitating sensibility ; and when once this train of impressions has supervened, the mind becomes more and more influenced by them. This phenomenon may appear singular, but it is not without analogy in life. We observe persons who possess a talent for mimicry assume, not only the appearance of those whom they are imitating, but their whole manner, and even the turn of their mind also ; and we even find, that when they are personating characters of more humour and originality than they themselves possess, ideas spring up in their minds, which, at another time, would never have occurred to them. Dress has a similar influence, causing those who adopt it to assume a countenance corresponding to particular feelings. The power of the military costume is well known ; and in some schools in England, giving decent clothing to children, already unhappily depraved, has been found a very efficacious means of impressing them with a degree of self-respect, and giving them habits of order and modesty. The effects of external objects on the mind is felt at every age ; and, like most

of the effects of instinct, is particularly strong in young children.

In fact, every thing with these little creatures is effected by means of sympathy and imitation ; the former is the ruling principle of their feelings, the latter of their actions. Children who are born blind have no idea of walking, because they have never seen others walk. They are obliged to be first raised up, then made to stand, and afterwards to move one foot after the other. Deprive a child of sympathy and imitation, and what has he left? Faculties and dispositions ; faculties which prepare him for imitating, and dispositions which determine his choice among various objects of imitation ; for children do not copy every thing they see indiscriminately ; they imitate only such examples as accord with their own inclinations. This source of diversity, together with the difference of circumstances, is sufficient to account for the great varieties of character which we find among them. But we may remark, that their choice is always confined to such objects as have been already presented to their notice.

Self-love arises from two sources : the pleasure which children derive from the success of their efforts ; and their desire that we should take an interest in this pleasure. Even at ten or eleven months old, if they have contrived to raise themselves up by a chair, they scream out

with delight, and are in a constant flutter of excitement till they have attracted our attention ; a triumphant joy sparkles in their eyes, and our praises are received with loving caresses.

Thus it is, that from these different elements, — the desire of agreeable and varied sensations, — of acting, imitating, and influencing, — of exciting and experiencing sympathy, — arise in our children all the attributes of human nature. At a year old we see the whole train of them appear ; and, if our sight be keen enough, traces of them may be discerned, even at an earlier age.

I might have introduced into this chapter some remarks on the power of the imagination, which, even in children under two years old, is already very great. But, as we are better able to appreciate the effect of this power when they have acquired the faculty of speaking, I have thought it more desirable to defer what I have to say on this subject to a later period.

CHAPTER V.

CONSEQUENCES TO BE DRAWN FROM THE PRE-
CEDING OBSERVATIONS.

OUR power over children depends chiefly on the influence of sympathy; understanding little of language, and less of reasoning, they could be governed only by force, were it not that their Heavenly Father has opened to us this access to their hearts. That instinct, which impels them to sympathize in our feelings, is the means which He has ordained, to lead them insensibly to adopt our sentiments, and to imitate our dispositions. But this instinct is not continued to them for an indefinite time: when no longer required, it is withdrawn, by the same hand which seems to have lent it for a time as a substitute for intelligence. The whole scene is now changed: when we have once undertaken to govern our children by reason, — that is, by making them understand that there are certain laws imposed on them by the nature of things, — the necessity which they had previously felt of harmonizing with us almost ceases to exist. They begin to observe our words, rather than

our feelings: they become conscious of an independent existence. But though it is, of course, our object to provide for the time when our parental authority must be resigned, we must not yet consent to give it up.

While under three or four years old, your children have no happiness so great as that of being with you; their wants, their pleasures, their feeling of insecurity, all place them in your power. Other children may amuse them for a time, but soon weary them: their little passions are mutually brought into action, and are constantly jarring: and the difficulty they find in understanding each other, and in agreeing together, brings them back to you. But when their minds have made a certain progress, when they have gained such a facility in speaking as enables them to form together a common plan, and join together in executing it, they are continually slipping away from your control. Running, leaping, climbing, exercising their activity in every possible way with their playfellows, — these are now their pleasures; and, unless you have already secured their affection, they may perhaps return to you from necessity, but will hardly do so from choice.

We might go farther, and assert, that at six years old the tastes and character are almost formed; at least an impression is already made which will not be easily effaced. If at

that age children are mischievous, obstinate, passionate: they will remain so till a new development take place, which cannot yet be brought into action. If flowers, birds, and rural objects in general do not now speak to their imagination, it will not be easy to make them lovers of nature, or to inspire them with a taste for the fine arts, which are representations of nature. If, in short, domestic affections, a sense of religion, and a certain respect for ideas of order and duty, are not already implanted in their minds—I will not say that every thing is lost—but I do say, either that the children have been very unfortunate in their natural dispositions, or that their parents have already much cause for self-reproach.

We do not in general sufficiently appreciate the great importance of the first year of infancy. We even affect to treat it with contempt, and to speak slightly of it. Because the infant cannot understand our fine discourses, and is not capable of being regularly instructed, we conclude that it is a mere insignificant little being, requiring only to have its physical wants attended to. Because its life is passed in playfulness, we treat it as a plaything. Every thing about it seems unimportant, because every thing is vague and uncertain; but if this were not the case, if every thing were fixed and immutable, our power would be at an end.

If the favourable season of sympathy have

been allowed to pass away, without our having gathered the fruits which it ought to have produced ; such as a desire to please and oblige, a wish to relieve the afflicted, the power of giving up a pleasure in order to bestow it on another ; —we shall soon arrive at a troublesome period, when our children will, to a certain degree, understand our exhortations, but will receive no moral impressions from them. Our reasonings may be listened to, understood, perhaps approved ; but they will produce little effect, because we refer to motives which have not acquired any influence over their minds. They will comprehend tolerably well the chain of our arguments, they will perceive the connection of the different ideas which form this chain ; but it is this connection only, and not the ideas themselves, which they admit. A child under these circumstances is like a person who hears us add up a column of figures, who can judge whether we proceed regularly or not, and who, if we said three and three made five, would correct us, but who would have no idea from this process of the real value represented by these numbers. So will a child of six years old often listen to our moralising. He cannot dispute the principles on which our reasoning is founded ; indeed he sometimes appears to have a pleasure in assenting to them : if he can speak with facility, he will himself, perhaps, draw

from them some beautiful moral inference: but we must not reckon with any certainty on the result of this conviction. If the heart be not already well disposed, such an exercise of the understanding will have little influence on the conduct.

To enlarge on this fundamental principle would lead to a long discussion, and would at present be premature; yet there is one remark I would here make. As children seem to have been endowed with a capability of feeling love and affection, before they are able to form any combination of ideas, would it not seem that the Creator had in this manner prepared those elements from which their future morality is to be composed? If, therefore, we neglect to make a timely use of the short-lived assistance afforded us by sympathy, we reverse this admirable order of things; and when the season, for which we have been waiting in order to commence the work of education, arrives, we have not provided ourselves with the necessary instruments: our principles of morality are mere empty formulas, without any responding feeling in the heart.

Even if there were no proof of the great importance of the sentiments with which we inspire very young children, we ought to take it for granted. It is assuredly the safest plan; and, besides this, it is certainly that from which we must hope to derive the greatest future advantage. At

a more advanced age, every possible resource has been tried. Reason and instruction have each been made to play their part; punishment, rewards, the strongest appeals to self-love,—all the heavy artillery of education has been employed, too often with little success. The only thing which has never been fairly tried, never pursued with any regularity, is the adoption of a positive system of education from the earliest infancy:—not only keeping children from the example of evil, but gently impressing on them a tendency to good; making them set out on the journey of life by the right road.

But, although this plan has never been methodically and regularly followed, it has frequently been pursued by a sort of lucky inspiration. How many happy characters, how many amiable qualities, have owed their existence to that instinct of sympathy in young children, which mothers know so well how to foster and encourage, and of which they make always so gentle, and sometimes so judicious, a use! The greatest service we could render to education would be, to improve and regulate what good sense and tenderness have often dictated to mothers; they understand thoroughly how to influence these little creatures: the method of doing this has, indeed, been indicated to them by Providence; for, at first, it consists almost entirely in loving them. It is a mother's love which excites a genial warmth in

their young hearts ; her looks, her caresses, call forth those affections which seem waiting only for this encouragement to spring up ; but, without these maternal looks and caresses, it is possible that the affections might not be called forth at all ; and the unhappy child deprived of them, might, perhaps, be long before he opened his heart to any feelings of love.

But what is so certain, so enduring, as a mother's love ? In it there is nothing accidental, nothing depending on circumstances, nor even on the qualities of the child. The new-born infant is trusted to this most powerful of instincts, not only for the preservation of its frail life, but for the acquirement of a moral existence ; both its body and soul are placed under this safeguard, the most certain and the most powerful which this world affords.

It appears, then, that the heart of a child is influenced before its understanding ; the sparks of affection are the first that are kindled in his breast, and are the least liable to be extinguished. "The law of love producing love," says the illustrious Chalmers, "will abide throughout eternity." It is the most indelible stamp of our nature ; we see it in the innocent little being still in its cradle ; and we recognise it even in the most hardened criminal. The unhappy wretch who appears dead to all sense of morality, will yet, if he perceive that he is

the object of real and sincere kindness, experience feelings of emotion in his withered heart, and seem to receive a fresh feeling of existence.

So true is it that love produces love in children, that they seem to have a peculiar tact in recognising it. Their preferences, unaccountable as they sometimes appear to us, generally display an inconceivable discrimination. Neither want of beauty, nor the infirmities of old age, are disagreeable to them; nor are their affections called forth by the most important services; simple genuine love is what they require — love unaccompanied by beauty or any external advantages, and even without any claim on their gratitude. But having once recognised the expression of this love, every additional act of kindness which proves its existence, redoubles their fondness; while, on the other hand, their dislike to a cold, dry expression of countenance is insurmountable. As nothing but evil can arise from this last impression, any thing likely to excite it should be carefully avoided. Persons who are disagreeable to a child have only an unfortunate influence over him; he will imitate what is wrong, but not what is good or amiable in them. Fear, impatience, and anger, are easily caught from persons with whom we have no sympathy; and if this want of sympathy amount to dislike, the communication of these passions becomes still

easier. But if we wish to instil gentle feelings, love must be excited; tenderness affords that genial warmth by which good seeds are fostered, and encouraged to spring up.

We must not, then, be satisfied if our children are merely benevolent; they must be loving and affectionate. Benevolence opens the heart; but it is love alone that can warm, and fill, and satisfy it completely. Love is more closely connected than sympathy with strength of mind; sympathy may exist, and may even acquire great power, in weak minds; but a certain degree of moral vigour is necessary to render the mind capable of individual attachment. We should not, therefore, unless for some very strong reason, disturb the first affections of our children. Even a change of nurse is a trial which we ought to spare them if possible; for if they possess much sensibility, there is danger in it. There have been instances of these poor little creatures pining away, and even dying, when separated from those whom they loved. And if, on the other hand, they are naturally cold or inconstant, this change will make them more so; and selfishness, the most odious of all propensities, and the bane of all education, will soon gain possession of their breasts.

It sometimes happens that a mother's jealousy leads her to dismiss an inferior rival, who seems for the time to have usurped her place in the

affections of her child; but in so doing she mistakes her own interest. Affection is more easily transplanted than raised; if the feeling be already in existence, it may be trained to change its direction; but the difficulty is, to make this feeling so powerful as to prevent the child from being entirely devoted to himself, and his own gratification. If he once learn to prefer his own pleasure to every thing else, we cannot hope for any change; nothing is so lasting as self-love. But, whatever may have been the case at an earlier age, it is seldom that children of five or six years old are not more strongly attached to their mother than to any one else. She is queen of the house—the distributor of all favours—the only one who can properly appreciate or reward merit;—and if, in addition to these advantages, she possess agreeable talents and information, she is the source of all pleasure, and displays a power, the effect of which, on such young minds, can scarcely be too highly estimated. She may then make herself easy as to the future, and has no need to break those ties by force, which will ere long naturally loosen themselves. Still it is better that children should, in the first instance, attach themselves more strongly to their mother, than to any one else. The changeableness which brings them back to her, is not interesting in itself, and is occasionally tardy in its action.

Sometimes, too, an ill-concealed rivalry may produce even a shade of vanity in the breast of the child, who sees his affection thus made an object of contention. "You pretend to love me better than any body," said a mother to her little girl; "why, then, do you wish, when you are unwell, to have your nurse with you, instead of me?" "Because," replied the child, "when I am ill, I forget that I ought to love you the best."

Besides, the only way in which we can acquire a knowledge of very young children, is by means of the attachment with which we inspire them. We may, indeed, love them ourselves; but unless we feel that we are loved in return, we cannot show that confidence, that opening of the heart, which will produce the same feelings in them. If our manner gives them the idea that we are keeping watch over them, they are discouraged, and consequently not at ease with us; and we have thus deprived ourselves of the assistance of sympathy, and allowed its powerful influence to be exercised by others.

Yet such delicate management does this feeble age require, that no rules can be laid down with regard to it, without many exceptions. Even sympathy, in many respects so useful in education, may be brought too constantly into action; and the consequence will

be, that children will become inconstant, and much too susceptible of impressions of every kind; so that any very strong feeling will raise a storm in their breast, exciting and agitating them to a degree which we could not have anticipated; and thus exposing them, in such an uncertain world as this, to many sorrows. It is on this account that passionately fond caresses are injurious to children; and Miss Edgeworth advises mothers to forbid them. They are, besides, a source of future injustice; for they are lavished only on engaging qualities, and are, perhaps, at an older period, refused to more real merit. Hence arises a distressing shock to the feelings of the child; a certain thirst for affection, which not being satisfied in the latter part of infancy, may sometimes associate itself with the impressions of a later age, and augment its dangers. Our caresses should, therefore, have in them something encouraging, and, if we may so express it, strengthening: they should be cheering, but not carried to excess: and we should be particularly careful to preserve them from any thing like an enervating tenderness. The more we give to them the character of approbation, the sooner shall we be able to make use of them as an assistance in education.

This interchange of gentle and affectionate feelings is, in fact, the only means by which

we can excite and bring into action the understanding of an infant. Any other language than that of kindness stupifies him; and depresses him even below his natural level. It is, therefore, a great error to use harsh or threatening tones with young children, as a means of deterring them from any action. They may perhaps be induced by them to leave off what they were doing, but it is only because we have confused and troubled them; we have broken the chain of their ideas, and perhaps brought them to tears; but when these tears have ceased to flow, they will have forgotten their previous occupation; and having no idea that we have forbidden it, will probably resume it at the first opportunity. It is only by means of sympathy that they can attach any meaning to our words; the tone of the voice, and the expression of the countenance, assist in explaining them; and hence arises a great difference in the degree of ease with which they understand us. If, therefore, we check this disposition by our harshness, they will no longer be able to comprehend what we wish. It is true, that by associating the recollection of an impression of fear with a certain action, they may be led to abstain from it: in this way, too, we teach and tame brute animals: but if we adopt this plan with our children, they will soon learn from it another lesson. Seeing us angry, they

will be sure to imitate the example we have set them: and the harsh expressions which we have used towards them, will, ere long, be applied by them to us. The instinct of imitation is stronger even than the feeling of fear in very young children; so that, except in the case of such an excess of severity as is now happily very rare, they regard us rather as models for imitation, than as objects of dread.

Be, then, particularly careful never to be angry, either with your children, or in their presence. Till they are three or four years old, the most justifiable indignation will appear to them only anger. Even if you are taking their part, the motive will soon be forgotten by them, and only the effect remain in their volatile imagination. When we reflect on the great advantage in after life, of a cool temper, it ought to be one of our most earnest desires to obtain this advantage for our children.

Dependent as they are, by their condition, there is yet an inward freedom and spirit of independence in children at a very early age: there is nothing servile either in their requests, their acquiescence, or even their fear: at eighteen months old, they act as they please, or not at all, without taking into account either their own weakness or our power. Their petitions, far from being humble, assume only too easily the tone of commands. If they endeavour to

oblige us, it is because they love us, and wish make us happy. Our threats may frighten them for a moment; but when recovered from this temporary disturbance, their docility is not increased; and our anger, by confusing their understanding, has only augmented their irritability.

It is clear, then, that if we were able to distinguish the various results of our own conduct, we should see them becoming every day more and more numerous, and should find them extending much farther than we had imagined. The different stimulants to moral developement which have been mentioned, sympathy, — love, — the instinct of imitation, — the expectation of either pleasure or pain, — are so many springs which can be set in motion only by *our* hands; and we continually influence our children, even without intending or wishing it, by the effect of our necessary attentions to them. The question, then, is not, shall we, or shall we not, exert this influence on the mind of the child; but shall we, or shall we not, do it with judgment?

To “leave nature to work,” in the most rational meaning of the expression, is to allow the equilibrium of forces the opportunity of re-establishing itself, when it has by any accident been destroyed. If the child be left to his own free choice at such a time, he will generally prefer that state which is really the

most salutary: he will exercise those faculties which have been lying idle, and will let those rest which have been fatigued; thus repairing in some degree the faults which we have committed. Children should on this account be often left to themselves, and allowed to choose their own employment. But whatever hopes we may rest on this tendency to equilibrium, it would be the height of folly to depend altogether on the energy of such a principle. Even supposing it active enough to prevent evil inclinations from being formed, it would never be sufficiently powerful to destroy them, when already existing. On the contrary, every inclination possesses a sort of instinct of self-preservation, which impels it to nourish and strengthen itself continually; so that if the inclination be dangerous, what we call nature, or the probable course of developement, is far from being favourable to future morality. So true is it that the earliest tendencies and dispositions should engage our most serious attention; and that the art of observing, quickly and accurately, is an invaluable talent in a mother.

CHAPTER VI.

ON LEARNING TO SPEAK.

THE rapid progress which children generally make in speaking, towards the conclusion of the second year, renders this a remarkable epoch in childhood. They attempt to articulate every thing, though of course these attempts vary much in their degree of success. Already do we perceive, when we observe the great difference exhibited by children in the power of speaking, how unequally the gifts of nature are distributed. This art requires the conjoint exercise of many faculties, moral as well as physical ; and if one of these be wanting, an obstacle is opposed to its progress. Thus, a good ear is necessary to appreciate sounds, and supple organs to articulate them : intelligence is required to comprehend words, and memory to retain them. It is not often that a child possesses all these qualities in an eminent degree ; but when he does, he will speak with tolerable fluency at two years old.

Nothing, perhaps, is more interesting than to watch the gradual breaking forth of the intellect

from the mist in which it is at first enveloped ; to see it springing forwards at the acquisition of every new expression, and making each attainment the step to a still greater. As yet almost strangers amongst the objects by which they are surrounded, children soon feel the necessity of making themselves masters of the words which are the signs of these objects, and which will furnish them with the means both of thinking and communicating their thoughts. They enter on a more intellectual existence — an existence in which images, and the tumultuous desires excited by them, still reign ; but into which, from this time, a more tranquil element is introduced.*

When children have once begun to speak, with what astonishing rapidity do they advance in this attainment ! Daily acquiring and using new words, they soon venture even on long sentences, and the amusement they find in talking is inexhaustible. At the sight of any object which interests them, they repeat its name over and over again, with a delight and satisfaction which we can hardly understand. We may often hear them relating to themselves any little inci-

* Here follow in the original some observations on the first words uttered by children, on their use of the different parts of speech, &c. &c., which the translator has omitted ; as, though interesting in themselves, they do not appear to bear very directly on the subject of education.

dent which has struck them, their eyes sparkling with the delight and pride which this power of prolonging their impressions produces. If arrested in their progress by any difficulty in articulation, shame and anger are displayed in their countenances, and they are not satisfied till they have achieved the pronunciation of the formidable word. When first learning to speak, children are indeed easily pleased; they are content if they can articulate the single accented syllable which has attracted their attention. But by degrees they become more fastidious; they begin to correct their enunciation, and are not happy till they have acquired the remaining syllables of the word.

It would almost seem as if there were an especial dispensation of Providence to enable children to learn to speak; but as their minds advance in intelligence, the gifts which have been previously bestowed on them—as transient as they are remarkable in their nature—lose their former value. Children of five or six years old learn few new words. We find, when they begin to read, that many terms, which they must continually have been hearing in conversation, are perfectly unintelligible to them. Having acquired a certain stock of words, sufficient for their purposes, they are satisfied, and desire nothing more. They have learnt how to name such things as interest them, and are

indifferent as to any others. They are even sometimes led by a sort of instinct to reject new acquirements, which might, perhaps, interrupt their enjoyment, or disturb their tranquillity. They are happy — and what should they wish for more? They live in peace and security, as if in the bosom of an enchanted island, and the waves of the external world resound unheeded around them.

We find a great difference in the comparative ease with which individual children express themselves; but this does not always depend on their greater or less degree of intelligence. Sometimes an agreeable and flowing utterance proceeds only from a talent for retaining certain set phrases, whilst a more laboured and less regular mode of speaking denotes an inward working of the mind, an anxious desire to suit the expression to the thoughts. This circumstance should not make us less hopeful as to the future; for, though a memory for words is not in itself an undesirable thing, it frequently leads those who possess it in any great degree, and who have not much taste for exercising their understanding, to be content with words instead of ideas.

As one sign is sometimes used by children to designate many objects, so is one object often represented to them by many signs; and for this reason they learn different languages with great

facility. Sounds are connected together in their memory like images, and one word brings in its train all those by which it had previously been accompanied. Hence they are not apt to confound together different idioms in their little sentences ; and if the same person always address them in the same language, there is little danger of any confusion : the idea of this person becomes associated in their minds with a particular mode of speaking, and they soon learn to employ the same mode in replying.

From this circumstance we derive a convenient method of facilitating to children an acquisition, of some importance certainly, though one which does not appear to me to add much to the progress of the intellect ; at least, not in any proportion to that produced by the regular study of a language. It may indeed be doubted whether the mere practical knowledge of a language contributes much to the development of the mind. We do not find that the inhabitants of frontier districts, who generally learn two languages at the same time, excel other men in acuteness of mind ; nor amongst the people of northern nations, where children are frequently brought up in the habit of speaking several different languages, do we meet with more instances of striking genius than elsewhere ; though they often possess a remarkable facility of comprehension. The study of this subject

might afford us many interesting facts. There is such a close connection between thought and speech, that the effect of their first association must be very important; and it would, therefore, be very useful to observe the influence of a *polyglot* education.

But, whatever may be thought of the desirableness of learning foreign languages, the habit of speaking their own correctly must always be of importance to children; and, when we neglect to secure this habit, by employing for the purpose the peculiar qualities of infancy, we commit an error, which, though not of the most serious nature, is not always easily corrected by subsequent education. This was not a fault with which the ancients could be reproached; indeed the pains which they took to improve the enunciation of their children, even in infancy, would, perhaps, appear to us frivolous and pedantic. But such pains would often be well bestowed in correcting the bad effect of example, especially in places where the pronunciation and idiom are equally vicious. It is not merely a question as to what is agreeable; nor can any thing be considered as frivolous which is connected with the most powerful means of influencing the imagination. Speech is the outward expression of the soul; and affords us the means of exercising the most unbounded power over the morality and happiness of others.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE HABITS FORMED AT TWO YEARS OLD.

It has been remarked by Locke, that children are so apt to forget any rules which may be laid down for their conduct, that the performance of such things as are absolutely necessary must be insisted on till it becomes a confirmed habit, entirely independent of the memory.* Our great object should be to influence the character of children, while it is offered to us in its simple purity. Too soon shall we find it altered and deteriorated; and be no longer able to distinguish what is natural from what has been acquired. Children soon become in some degree ashamed of their little singularities. They conceal, or restrain, those feelings in which they are aware, that we shall not sym-

* Remember children are not to be taught by rules, which will be always slipping out of their memories. What you think necessary for them to do, settle in them by an indispensable practice as often as the occasion returns, and if it be possible make occasions. — *Locke on Education.*

pathize; and they endeavour to find out what impressions they are expected to receive. But notwithstanding this first deviation from nature, the characteristic features of this age are not effaced so soon as we are apt to imagine; traces of them, though often unnoticed, remain for some time. We are still living with a little uncivilized being, who may perhaps have been brought into some slight training as to outward demeanour, but all the workings of whose mind cannot be understood by us, unless we have carefully studied him from the hour of his birth.

This study, however, is not so easy as it might at first sight appear. Before children can speak, their whole life appears a scene of confusion: their manner of feeling, of connecting ideas, and comparing them together, differs so entirely from ours, that we can neither understand nor explain it; and thus they present us with a problem equally interesting and incapable of solution. At a more advanced period, when our means of communicating with them are increased, and they might themselves be able to throw some light on the subject, the difference between them and us is no longer so decidedly marked, and the child, in appearance at least, already too much resembles the man. We have, then, one short interval which is more instructive to the observer than any other — that in which real infancy still exists, undisguised and open to

our view — the period from two years old to four. At this age children are as yet unguarded in their feelings and expressions; and their natural instincts, still in their first vigour, seem to be developed with their increasing strength; while their newly acquired power of speech, and the greater number and variety of their actions, serve as interpreters to those feelings and instincts. Our social condition is, however, still little understood by them, and they might be inhabitants of any other world as well as of ours. But to mark how they insensibly adopt our ideas — how their violent and impetuous will learns by degrees to submit to the control of reason and example — how their young faculties, according to their several natures, and assisted by the first glimmerings of conscience, combine to raise a feeling of moral responsibility in the breast, — would furnish most interesting and curious subjects for observation; revealing to us a beautiful dispensation of Providence, — a design which has only to be understood, in order to be admired and revered.

Following the natural order of time, we shall first consider that period when the mind has not yet acquired any power over itself; when the will, however eager and lively it may appear, is, in fact, a passive agent, yielding to the strongest inclination, and obeying a blind impulse. At this time we govern children by means of those

habits which our attention and regularity have naturally generated. But this method, though gentle in its nature, and always to be made use of in some degree, is rather too mechanical to be the only one employed. Habits there must be; and these habits must be either favourable or unfavourable to our plans of education. Their formation is prevented only by an unequal and capricious conduct on our part; and the example of such a conduct would assuredly be soon imitated by our children.

Though the remark may appear paradoxical, it is I believe true, that the younger an infant is, the more do its habits relate to its moral existence. As it does not yet act independently, it can only be accustomed to foresee: it expects a certain succession of events, and its habits consist only in hopes and fears. We do not, therefore, observe it thoughtlessly performing a series of actions, like a piece of machinery; but its desires, its tastes, and its character, are all influenced by its hopes and fears. It is only at a later period, when the active powers are developed, and the pleasure attached to certain exercises of them begins to wear off, that the mind is able to remain unconcerned, and, as it were, hardly aware of those very actions in which it had at first taken so lively an interest. Habits have not, therefore, in very early infancy, the disadvantage, which seems almost

necessarily attached to them, of deadening the faculties ; and children retain for a long time so much flexibility of mind that we can bend them to our wish.

There is one advantage in a well-conducted early education, which, though of secondary importance, is not easily acquired in any other way — that of accustoming children to perform, without thinking, a number of actions, desirable and useful in themselves, though scarcely deserving to have much thought bestowed upon them. By giving them habits of complying with certain physical and conventional regulations, we are exempting their minds from future care on these subjects. The more we make use in this respect of the instinct of imitation, the more we shall spare ourselves hereafter the pain of having to prescribe as duties things which are not such in reality, yet which are almost indispensable ; and we shall thus, too, render an inestimable service to the child. How much embarrassment, how much awkwardness, how much waste both of time and thought, is often occasioned even to grown men by doubts respecting the propriety of the most trifling actions !

Children acquire habits from the same faculty of association which assists them in learning to speak. If the daily routine of their life be well regulated, their desires succeed each other nearly in a fixed order, exciting in their

minds the images of certain objects which are become necessary to their happiness. But no single or insulated image appears to them ; the apparatus, the accompaniments, are constantly joined to the principal object, making an essential part of it in the idea they form in their minds. I have seen an infant of only nine months old, cry bitterly and refuse its food, because the cup, saucer, and spoon were not all in their usual position. By making use of this disposition, a taste for order may easily be given to children at a very early age. The wish to see every thing in its proper place becomes natural and habitual to them, if they see that we have the same desire ; and when we think of the bitter regret often caused in after life by the want of habits of order, we should earnestly endeavour to bestow on our children what is of so much consequence to their future happiness. A vague idea of duty is soon associated with such a habit ; and, in truth, duty itself may perhaps be said to be nothing more than the obligation of complying with moral order of the most elevated nature.

From the same source arises a taste for neatness : a dirty spot is a sort of disorder, — a thing out of its place. Modesty, too, is nearly related both to order and neatness ; nor is there any thing easier than to inspire children with that instinctive modesty which, from being

merely the result of habit, is the more pure and innocent. This last object, which is too often neglected in infancy, is yet of the greatest importance; and though to some it may appear absurd, I should say it is of especial importance to boys. Custom has imposed such strict laws regarding decency on girls, that, unless an uncommon degree of negligence should exist, their manners, when very young, are not likely to be endangered. But this is not the case with boys; their feelings and habits are early exposed to danger at school; and the firmness with which they will there resist the influence of bad example must depend entirely on the strength of their first impressions. It is, therefore, especially necessary for mothers to be constantly on their guard; they must keep a most careful watch over nurses, or any others who may have the charge of their children; and they must particularly take care that no idea of mirth or amusement is ever associated in their minds with a want of decency. They should, as soon as possible, be entrusted with the care of their own persons, and be directed to perform in solitude the duties connected with it. Hence, we may perhaps, occasionally produce a timid and almost severe degree of modesty; but in a feeling so nearly allied to dignity of mind, we need not be afraid of a little excess.

There are other sentiments, which, though

they may seem to belong to a higher kind of morality, arise at first from the simple association of images, and are therefore, in fact, merely the effect of habit. Amongst these may be reckoned a regard for property. The sense of sight forms a great part of the existence of children. The objects which are constantly presented to their eyes, when looking on one whom they love, make a part of the image impressed on their memory : her dress, the little articles of which she makes use, — all are of importance in their eyes. They picture her to themselves, as the fabulous deities of antiquity are represented to us, surrounded with all her attributes ; and if they observe that she alone makes use of certain things, they feel fully persuaded that they belong exclusively to her ; and will even sometimes become jealous of her property, and defend it like a faithful dog, suffering no one to approach it. I have seen a little girl of eighteen months old, who, when walking out, would cry if any one touched her nurse's basket ; and the same child uttered loud screams one day on seeing a woman, whom she did not know, carry away a gown of her mamma's. From that time she has always been uneasy at the sight of strangers ; but if they go away empty-handed, she will show them out of the room with an affectation of politeness, which but ill conceals her relief at their departure.

From this feeling, which becomes stronger by being exercised, early ideas of honesty may be given to children. At infant schools, children of not more than two years old are taught not to touch the fruit or flowers in the garden, and to respect the most trifling articles of property belonging to their companions. It is true that the master, or teacher, is very exact in setting them a good example in this respect, and never fails to restore any playthings which may, for a short time, have been taken from them. This precaution is absolutely necessary, both on account of the great power of the instinct of imitation, and also because it contributes very much to the cultivation of that most desirable quality, a kind disposition. It is only when children feel quite sure that their property will be restored to them, that they can have any pleasure in lending it to others. But they may, by degrees, be led to consider the power of lending, or giving, as one of the most valuable privileges attached to the possession of property of any kind; and the wish to take care of it may thus be associated in their minds with the idea of generosity.

The feeling of general benevolence—a feeling which should be sedulously cultivated—leads so naturally to habits of politeness, that we should scarcely need to trouble ourselves about these, were it not of importance to have them established before shyness—the effect of a more

advanced state of self-love — begins to be displayed. But, if a truly religious system of education were pursued, children would pass insensibly from sympathy to charity, and to the love of others; and rude pride, or irritable vanity, would be unknown.

It is thus that the qualities which are the happy fruits of early habits blend with those bestowed by nature, and are invested with nearly equal charms. Children possess them unsullied by any feeling of vanity, for they are not aware that they could have existed without them. Yet, could we trace them to their source in our own minds, we should acknowledge them with gratitude as the greatest and most indisputable blessings of education.

CHAPTER II.

ON OBEDIENCE.

OF all the habits which we should be anxious to impress on very young children, there is none so absolutely necessary as that of obedience; for it is only by means of this that we obtain the power of forming or repressing others. At present I speak of obedience merely as the result of habit, though it may be regarded in a much higher point of view, as a moral obligation; but at the early age which we are now considering, the habitual practice of obedience gradually awakens the idea of duty, though the idea of duty would not yet be sufficient to produce obedience.

If we observe children attentively; we shall find that they possess an innate instinct of independence; and at the same time an equally natural feeling which prompts them to yield their own will to ours; so long at least as our conduct towards them is governed by regularity and firmness. They often adopt our ideas from sympathy — they find it is useless to resist us;

and above all they belong to us, and they rejoice in belonging to us.

A little girl of three or four years old no sooner possesses a doll than she regards it as her child, taking for granted that this affectionate connection renders it more completely her own. Children soon understand that they are our most beloved and valued property; we show this by our love, and by our anxiety about them; and hence it is that, even when they have not formed any very distinct notions on the subject, our forbidding certain actions appears to them quite natural. As our prohibitions are generally dictated from a regard to the safety either of the children themselves, or of something belonging to us, they are not surprised at them, though they are continually forgetting them. But the case is different with respect to commands. These, children have more difficulty in understanding, and are less willing to obey. Yet they are often more agreeable to their dispositions, inasmuch as a command requires action, while a prohibition forbids it. If the action be such as will please them, merely mentioning it may be sufficient; but imperatively to command a little child to do something, which we know to be disagreeable to him, is only uselessly compromising an authority as yet hardly established.

Such a distinction, however, cannot long be allowed, since the principal end for which power is confided to us — the safety of the child — requires that we should be able effectually to command as well as to forbid; but it seems as if the difference with respect to submission in the two cases arose from a certain subtle discernment of the rights of a free being. The child is weak and feeble; personally, he is entirely in our power, for he has no means of resisting us; but his mind is independent. We cannot force him to act against his will; he is astonished at our attempting it. This feeling is, in some degree, worthy of esteem; it is the germ of a dignity of character which should not be destroyed by force. To combine respect for this firmness of character in children, with the necessity of exacting obedience from them, is, perhaps, though not an insurmountable difficulty, one of the greatest which occurs in education.

Long before the age when children analyse their own motives, we may, without having recourse to the aid of fear, simply by engaging their sympathy, and making use of a little foresight, give them the habit of obedience; and thus, in spite of the turbulence and changeableness which, with our imperfect wisdom, we cannot at all times prevent, we may generally acquire an authority, of which we must be very careful to make a good use.

It is astonishing that, on this point, any distinction should ever be made between our own interest and that of our children. This interest must ever be the same. An excess of severity as certainly causes the unhappiness of both parents and children, as the exercise of a just and gentle authority produces peace and happiness.

We are sometimes told that, as children are not destined to yield at all times, and to every one, obedience is only a temporary good, and does not in itself deserve the name of a virtue. To a certain degree this is true; but yet they must always obey in some way or other. Man, as an infant, obeys his parents; afterwards he yields the same obedience to the idea of duty, as imposed upon him by the force of habit; and at last he obeys the simple idea of duty itself, which has then assumed an independent existence in his mind. It is only the motive of his obedience which changes; the virtue remains the same.

And even should we allow that obedience is not really a virtue, but merely a necessary condition by which the benefit of education is to be obtained, still this condition must be fulfilled. Without the complete possession of authority parents could never accomplish their sacred task. Tell them, if you will, to use this power with moderation, with justice; but, if you dispute their right to it, all responsibility is taken away.

That there should exist in life an imperious obligation, a sacred and positive duty, without any legitimate means of fulfilling it, is in itself a contradiction. But no duty is more strictly imposed on us, both by divine and human laws, than that of carefully bringing up our children. We ought as far as possible to make them partakers of every good of which we can form an idea; we must watch over their safety, their health, their instruction; we must inspire them with a love for others, and an earnest desire to possess a pure conscience. We are answerable both to God and society for these cherished beings; and shall authority, the simple, and indeed the only means of fulfilling our obligations, be denied to us?

We are, at present, considering only the first principles of obedience. When we come to treat of it more at large, we shall see how false and absurd are those persuasions by which we too often seek to influence the will of children. We shall see how seldom they are deceived by them, and how much the contest thus established between them and us, the alternate dissimulation and hesitation, tend to destroy that very energy of character which our management was intended to respect. The disadvantages of a harsh, despotic education are great; but the crime of enervating the will cannot be laid to its charge: it is example that strengthens the

energy of the will; and the qualities of indolence, cunning, a desire for temporizing; — in fact, almost all our dispositions, are equally encouraged and strengthened by example.

But the question is at once settled, when we observe that even those parents who abandon their prerogatives in theory, resume them in practice; and that such an opinion, if adopted, would lead to nothing but contradictions and inconsistencies. Never will they really renounce their authority; in fact they cannot do so — their love is too ardent — their interest too strong — their responsibility too great; they cannot abjure human nature. Perhaps Rousseau has made you uneasy as to the lawfulness of your authority. But if your child be exposed to a real danger, or even to a trifling or imaginary inconvenience, you snatch him up in your arms and carry him away; your scruples, your resolutions, your theories, are all forgotten, and nature obtains the victory. You will say, “I am doing wrong;” and so you are. But your error consists in having adopted principles which your most sacred duty, as well as your unconquerable feelings, oblige you to violate.

That a child, who has not from his very cradle been brought up with an idea of the sacred nature of parental authority, but has been treated as an equal, reasoned with, per-

suaded, should see something odious in what seems to him a brutal abuse of superior strength, ought not surprise us. The employment of reasoning pre-supposes that the being to whom it is addressed has a right *not* to be persuaded to do what is wished. In your conduct, then, on this occasion, there exists a degree of treachery; and the resistance and screams of the child show that he feels it as such. You may be sure that, in future, whenever you begin an exposition of your motives, he will anticipate the conclusion, and will attend only so far as to enable him to prove, by refuting your reasoning, that you are in the wrong. Hence arises an insufferable and most fatal state of things between the parent and child — each fearful and hypocritical in their manner to each other — each trying to obtain what he wishes without coming to an open breach — each distrusting the other; and at length ending either in a fit of ill humour or a regular quarrel. This last catastrophe is, in fact, what best pleases the child, for he thus succeeds in vexing you, by forcing you to use violence towards him; you are reduced to the necessity of acting the part of a tyrant, because you have not performed that of a parent. The fruit of such imperfect obedience is seen in the formation of cunning, selfish, capricious, obstinate, and inconsistent characters.

Domestic discipline, formerly too rigorous, is now, perhaps, carried to the other extreme; for though the principle of it may be changed, and may no longer be that of submission to power, yet it ought to be that of submission to duty. It should be governed by a more pure, a more moral spirit; by respect for that parental authority which, to a child, stands in the place of the authority of God.

One principal idea, that of protection, ought to predominate in early education, and to serve as a rallying point to every other. Let the mother (for in speaking of very young children it is to her that we particularly address ourselves) lay fast hold of this principle, and she will easily be guided by it: she will easily find the happy medium between severity and indulgence, between firmness and love. Without love, protection would not be sufficiently vigilant; it would not extend itself over the entire happiness and interests of infant existence; and without firmness and that degree of severity by which it is necessarily accompanied, there is no protection. What gives way cannot serve as a support, and children both require and desire support. If you are to them only, as it were, another child; if you partake in their passions, in their continual vacillations; if you return all their impulses, strengthened either by contradiction or by an excess of compliancy, your

children may, perhaps, make use of you as a plaything, but they will not feel happy in your presence; they will cry, or rebel, and will soon learn to associate with your idea the remembrance of a period of disturbance and ill humour. You have not been to them a support; you have not preserved them from that perpetual fluctuation of purpose, to which weak and imaginative beings are always liable; you have not secured either their peace, their goodness, or their happiness, and why should they think of you as indeed their mother?

The laws that we impose on children will, of course, be occasionally infringed; and the idea of evil will thus become associated with certain actions not in themselves criminal. But at this young age we have nothing to do with the knowledge of good and evil. The question is not to enlighten the conscience, but to accustom children to listen to its voice, such as it is. The morality of sympathy is the only one of which they have any knowledge; and this teaches them, that to satisfy those whom they love is good, and to displease them evil. Even when a child has committed no fault, he thinks himself culpable if he observe an expression of dissatisfaction in his mother's eyes; and if he has caused her real distress, if in a moment of impatience he has struck her, his grief amounts almost to despair. I have seen a child on such

an occasion, without being punished, or even reproached, give up playing, and run to hide himself in an obscure corner, turning his face to the wall, and sobbing bitterly.

This feeling, changeable and inconstant as it may be, is nevertheless the first dawning of conscience ; what at present springs only from his wish to keep in favour with his mother, will soon become a feeling of duty in the child ; this feeling may, indeed, be exhausted by too frequent, or by indiscreet, calls upon it ; or it may be weakened for want of being fostered by exercise : but this is the case with all our feelings. If not cultivated and exercised, they wither away ; if imprudently or prematurely excited, they are exhausted. A child, in whom the seeds of conscience have not been carefully fostered and cherished, will have no moral existence.

In order to apply to practice what has here been advanced, I will point out some of the most gentle means of obtaining obedience at a very early age. At first, when the habits of children, as yet merely passive, consist only in the expectation of our actions, the most important point for us to observe is, uniformity in our own conduct. We should carefully preserve children from any surprise which may be revolting to their feelings, or might suddenly break the train of their impressions. If, from seeing our pre-

parations for any undertaking, they find out our intention, this intention, if constantly fulfilled, becomes to them by degrees a law. As they have already given up opposing our plans, so they will, in a short time, give up attempting to execute their own, when they feel sure that we shall oppose them. Actions alone at first establish authority; for our words produce no effect, except as forerunners of our actions: "My dear, I am going to take away that knife from you," comes to mean in a little while, "My dear, lay down that knife." One expression is equivalent to the other. Hence we should be careful never to forbid any thing which it is not in our power to prevent; and we should always prevent what we have begun by forbidding. It is on this account (as was observed before) that a command which requires the performance of an act endangers our authority; and even as regards prohibitions, it is in vain to expect children to consider them at first as intended to be permanent. They understand them only as the expression of your will at the moment. "You must never climb on chairs," means to them no more than, "I do not wish you to get on that chair now." They will consequently for some time, without any intention of rebelling against your authority, disobey you, even in your presence; and still more in your absence, because they have no fear but

of your displeasure. But, when the idea of this displeasure has been often associated with some particular act, they will at last refrain from it. And if, when they are not with you, they are allowed to be with those only who forbid the same things, in the same manner that you do, they will, by degrees, feel themselves under the control of a law which will prevent their even thinking of doing what is prohibited.

When our object is to obtain obedience, there is nothing we should more carefully avoid than any kind of pleasantry. Joking with children places them on an equality with us; as soon as we laugh we resign our authority. Play frequently with your children; show them the tenderest affection; but when once you have required obedience, leave off playing or laughing; do not caress them; do not even persuade them. You are called upon to exercise a sacred right, and the feeling of this right will be weakened, both in your child's mind and your own, if you bring so many different motives into action.

Children will often endeavour, by a thousand various arts, to accomplish their little schemes, or to overcome your opposition to them. Coaxing, importunity, drollery, are all tried in turn. Sometimes we may observe them venturing on a series of petty trespasses, increasing so gradually in degree, that we can hardly fix on a point where to arrest them. But it is to our own

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sole and idle way of governing that we owe these attempts. We have spoken carelessly, and have been listened to in the same manner. When we are about to make any regulation, a greater air of seriousness, something more imposing in our countenance, should show the child that the playfellow has disappeared, and that it is the parent who now speaks. It is of great importance to assume an expression of calm firmness; and if, instead of raising our voice, we suddenly lower it, we appear to address ourselves more intimately to the child, — to speak to his conscience.

The adoption of the following *Penal Code*, for children of two years old, will prevent the necessity of employing a more severe one afterwards: —

Disobedience caused by forgetfulness. Oppose the continuance of the act by renewing, in a kind manner, the prohibition.

Relapse, a little more voluntary. Assume a serious air, and warn the child that, on a repetition of the fault, his power to disobey will be taken away.

Relapse, entirely voluntary. Put the threatened punishment in execution, silently making such an arrangement as will render disobedience impossible.]

In this last case, the child will generally be made angry, and will show his anger by endea-

vouring to punish you ; he will pretend to caress some one else, and do his utmost to irritate you. As long as the prescribed bounds are not passed, take no notice of his intentions ; but if he proceed to open rebellion, if, tired of your inattention to his trifling faults, he commit more serious ones, you must then at once and decidedly put an end to them. Take the little culprit by the hand, and, without speaking, gravely put him behind a great arm-chair, the terrible place of punishment. It is amusing to observe the secret air of triumph which mingles with his tears, at the idea that he has at last succeeded in disturbing you. But make this feeling of triumph as short and as trifling as possible, by taking care to preserve a perfectly calm manner. And we may remark, in passing, on the dangerous effect of anger, which affords to the child both a wrong example, and a criminal pleasure. Quietly resume your occupations, and you may be sure that, in a very short time, his tears will either cease to flow, or the feeling which causes them will be changed ; they will no longer be tears of angry triumph, but a gentle appeal to your pity ; and the slightest look will bring the culprit to your arms. An opening of the heart, a tender and cordial reconciliation will succeed, and the child will voluntarily own his sorrow for what he has done ; a confession more easily obtained, and more sin-

cerely pronounced, than a cold asking for pardon. What you wish for is, not the humiliation of your child, but the expression of affectionate regret, of a real return to goodness.

We thus see how words and actions may alternately supply each other's place ; and that it is the best plan not to employ both these means at once ; we are then better able to preserve a calm manner, and a stronger impression is made on the child. Noise and scolding frighten children, but do not often correct them ; they frequently produce tears, but seldom repentance. We should remember that our only object in punishment (and harsh reprimands are a kind of punishment) ought to be, to improve the inward disposition ; if inflicted from any other motive, we become the offenders ; and if it produce any other effect, it only proves our own incapacity and want of skill. In educating our children, the duty of guarding their happiness must yield only to that of guarding their innocence, which is of still more value, as involving an essential condition of their happiness.

CHAPTER III.

THIRD YEAR. — ACTIVITY.

WERE it possible to doubt the innumerable benefits which the goodness of God has bestowed on our existence, we have only to look at young children, and our doubts must be removed. The most simple events, — even the necessary actions of life, — seeing, speaking, walking, are all to them sources of the greatest enjoyment.

About two years old, we may generally perceive a remarkable change in children. Their desires become more decided; their will proceeds from a more definite motive; every thing in their life is less vague and uncertain, — more full of meaning. Their very movements, more correct and easy, have also a more distinct object. They begin to form independent plans, and their existence, becoming more active in its nature, assumes a marked character, which displays itself in their speeches and their conduct.

The simple exercise of their strength is an

inexhaustible source of pleasure to children. Give them an idea of any action, and they are directly eager to try it; every thing they see others do excites their powers of imitation; but this imitation does not extend to more than outward actions: they do not trouble themselves as to either the causes or effects of these actions. They observe their mother working with a needle, or their father making black lines on a piece of paper, and will, as soon as they have the means, partake in these natural amusements. The pleasure they feel in the occupation is sufficient; there is no need of any farther interest. But, as the enjoyment attached to a simple action diminishes, the necessity of an object supervenes.

Observe a group of children of different ages. He who can just walk proudly drags along an empty little cart; the noise of the wheels behind him is enough to make him happy. Another, a little older, must have a doll to ride in it: a third, still older, will give the doll a character, and make it act a part: while a child of five or six years old will fill the cart with sand, grass, or straw, thus trying to imitate, with some appearance of reality, any rural occupation. First arises the wish for simple activity—then that for the pleasures of imagination.—and lastly that for supposed, or real, utility. Such is the progress of the moral

wants of early childhood; and to furnish continual food to this craving for activity, without making use of too strong stimulants, may perhaps, be called a summary of education. As far as regards the intellect we have, indeed, no other means of cultivating it; but our concern at present is with the formation of the character. For this object, the exercise of the moral faculties is necessary: children will not long be contented with external action only, or with sensations in which the mind remains passive; they will even grow weary of them. The amusements of this kind which we procure for them are often continued too long: but the activity that arises from internal feeling finds its own limits, and confines itself within them. We should sedulously endeavour to cultivate this mental activity; ill humour, turbulence, and disobedience almost always proceed from listlessness in children: the great art, if you wish them to be good and happy, is to furnish their minds with occupation.

In poor families, children, if their mother possess good sense and gentleness, are often more forward, and more rational, than those in a higher rank. They enjoy peculiar advantages. They not only interest themselves, but take a part, in most of the occupations carrying on around them: all the household affairs are within their comprehension, and in

many they are able to assist. This succession of different employments, which they see going on, and in which they bear a part, exercises their minds; and whilst it affords them amusement, gives them at the same time a taste for making themselves useful. Occupied themselves, and seeing that others are not attending to them, they do not live for themselves alone: they have the feeling of a common interest in which each ought to partake according to his ability. What can be better for young children than this sort of discipline?

But circumstances are very different in families where the parents are of a higher class. Our employments, more refined and elevated in their character, are incomprehensible to children; and, not leaving our minds at liberty to attend to them, cause them only excessive weariness. If, from good nature, we suspend our occupation, they perceive directly that we are only trying to amuse them; or that we are caressing them only in order to excite their affection for us: and if this intention be too evident, our success becomes only the more doubtful. Children are exacting, capricious, fastidious; — parents who are trying to please them often show a degree of affectation in their attempts to lower themselves to their level; the intercourse is not natural on either side; they do not meet on the firm

ground of mutual services, and satisfied desires; every thing is carried on through the medium of demonstrations, exhortations, or pleasantries: that is to say, by means of words: — trifling things, addressed to beings as trifling.

We are thus reduced to have recourse to a variety of diversions, or, in other words, to the pleasures of the imagination, in order to make ourselves agreeable to our children. We keep their young minds under the dominion of illusion, and exercise their activity by supplying them with a multitude of amusements which afford them the means of imitating real life. A great resource, no doubt, and one calculated to promote the growth of their intelligence; but, as far as their moral character is concerned, real and interesting employment would be much more useful.

The craving which children feel for active occupation might be made much more useful than it is in the work of education. Feelings which are often tardy in unfolding, might be more speedily developed by means of this simple pleasure. A single example may serve to illustrate my meaning. A first child, who has long been the sole object of his mother's care and affection, often sees with grief the arrival of a younger infant; and, unless we are carefully on our guard, jealous feelings will almost inevitably arise in his breast. He is blamed for these; —

perhaps even scolded, and obliged to give up his playthings to his little rival should it wish for them : — and what is the consequence ? His love for it diminishes every day : its appearance excites only painful feelings ; he revenges himself, when he can, for the vexation it has caused him ; envy springs up in his breast, and a habit of wrangling is established between the brothers, which displays itself in all their amusements, and but too often continues to manifest itself in after life. This evil might easily have been prevented, by contriving, as soon as possible, to employ the elder child about the younger. If he fancies he has assisted in getting it to sleep, or in dressing it ; or if, when he is seated safely on the ground, we place the little one on his knees for him to nurse it, his cheeks will glow with pleasure ; a lively sympathy will be excited ; he will imagine himself its father, and will conceive for it the tenderest affection.

There is an interesting anecdote related by Mrs. Hamilton, in her excellent work on education, which may serve as a farther illustration of this subject. She saw, in a remote part of Scotland, two poor children ; the eldest of whom, a boy of three years old, was daily left in charge of his younger brother. He took care of him, fed him, dressed him, and never left him for an instant ; fulfilling all the duties of the most watchful mother. At dinner time he took his little

charge into the cottage, lighted a small fire, which he managed very dexterously, and prepared the simple meal which was to serve for them both. "Take care, Daniel," said a person who was watching him one day, "take care you do not burn his mouth." "No fear of that," answered the boy, "for I always take the first mouthful myself." What an important lesson might be learnt from this anecdote! There was not much danger of this child becoming selfish.

But though we may endeavour to hasten the developement of the affections, we must be careful not to exact sacrifices from our children. These must not be expected, till the affection from which they spring has taken firm root. We are too apt to fall into this error. If a little beggar come to the door, we, perhaps, make a pathetic harangue to our child, exhorting him to charity and benevolence; and, in the end, almost obliging him to give the bread or fruit in his hand to the poor child. This, however, is not acting judiciously. But send him to fetch a cake, an article of clothing, or any thing else which is likely to excite an emotion of lively joy in the little beggar, at the same time that it requires no sacrifice on the part of the child, and he will soon find so much pleasure in the act of giving, that he will even deprive himself of some of his own treasures in order to enjoy it.

A feeling, which is not yet firmly established,

cannot be expected always to gain the victory over self-love or personal interest; and it would be imprudent to expose it to the trial of struggling with inclinations, which are, as yet, superior to it in power. But the feeling may itself be strengthened by exercise. Let the recollection of some happy effort, or successful undertaking, be associated with it, and the pleasure, which was in reality caused by activity, will be placed to the account of feeling; it will gain confidence and strength from the remembrance of the difficulties it has overcome, and will thus become really capable of surmounting still greater obstacles.

We might, perhaps, were we to analyze this feeling very minutely, discover in it some mixture of self-love. But it is to be feared, that even our purest motives are not free from some degree of this weakness. When, indeed, animated pleasures, vanity, and selfish interests, stand in front, they are strengthened by exercise; and the pleasure arising from activity is turned to their advantage. But whenever these appear only in the back-ground, and truly noble and generous motives are brought forward, it will be on the latter that the imagination will rest; and to them that the child will attribute the satisfaction he feels. Hence it is, that the too common use of rewards of a very doubtful tendency — stimulants which act

upon the least amiable feelings of the human heart — does not really produce so much evil as we might have apprehended. , Their influence is counteracted in the minds of children ; and the salutary results of activity overcome even the hurtful tendency of the means employed to excite it. But is this any valid apology for the parents ?

The idea of making use of the pleasure which children take in active employment, by bringing real life, with all its various interests, sooner within their reach, seems likely to become, at some future time, the *primum mobile* of education. Some trials of this plan have already been attempted ; and, if it were made the great object in such experiments to bring into action pure and disinterested motives for exertion, we might hope for real improvement in the education of future generations. But, as long as instructors attach a higher value to temporary success, than to the motives which prompted the efforts by which that success was obtained, — as long as they attend more to external acquisitions than to internal feelings, they will never succeed in bringing the faculties of the mind to their greatest perfection. If the moral qualities do not attain their full growth, the intellectual powers will be dwarfed with them.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE THIRD YEAR.—ON TRUTH.

Nothing, perhaps, in children, is more interesting to us than their progress in speaking : here, every thing is new and characteristic ; every thing is closely connected with their moral character. Even from his cradle the child has felt what it was to love, to hope, to desire : he has exercised his organs and his strength ; yet his progress has been so gradual, that we have hardly been able to trace its different steps, and we imagine it much the same in all children. But as soon as they can speak, every thing becomes clearer : their impressions, their thoughts, have each a distinguishing symbol ; and we remember and repeat their words. It seems as if a light were at once thrown upon the mind and character, which enables us to see and understand what we have to act upon.

This knowledge is most essential ; but it is not to be acquired without much pains and study. Children, though so ingenuous and simple, do not always adhere to the truth. They use dissimulation, if we may so express it, innocently,

and often display a singular mixture of cunning and artlessness. Sympathy, that instinct by means of which they have already made so much progress, tends rather to deceive them as to the use of words. They imagine themselves created rather to please others, or to obtain the gratification of their own wishes, than to speak the truth, of which, indeed, they have little idea. Why should a child be accurate in his relation of facts? What does the past — historical truth — signify to him? His recollection of it is very imperfect. The only thing of importance to him is to be caressed and loved, and to obtain what he desires. It is in vain to ask him what he has been doing: he will say only what he thinks will please you; and therefore the most natural answer in a child of two years old would be, that he has been doing whatever he imagines you would wish him to have been doing.

This is also the case among savages; a traveller finds it very difficult to obtain from them the most simple information; so much are they occupied in considering what his interest; or rather their own, may be in the question, that he cannot even learn the road to any place, every one to whom he addresses himself giving a different answer.

Some degree of artifice seems almost natural to children; even after they have learnt to avoid falsehood in speaking, they will practise it in

their actions : for actions become lies when their object is to deceive. A child of eighteen months old will carefully hide a little basket which he has long coveted, and then come and settle himself quietly by his mother : he wishes to be, and to appear, calm ; but too much agitated to succeed, he provokes her attention by loading her with caresses. A heightened colour, and an expression at once tender and confused — the very excess of his coaxing — all tend to betray him. Whence arises this increased affection ? For these demonstrations of it are not altogether insincere. Does the child feel the value of the tie which binds him to his mother the more, from expecting an approaching rupture ? Does he pity her, imagining that he has deprived her of something very precious ? Or does he give vent to his inward emotion by these outward expressions of affection ? What a depth of mystery there is in the heart even of an infant !

Another child will borrow a fan, or any thing else which may have attracted his fancy, from a visiter ; and then, hoping that she will forget to reclaim it, will bring her a succession of flowers, cast off toys, or a hundred other things, offering them to her with the most eager politeness. Or he will ask for a cake, or for the enjoyment of some pleasure *for his little brother*. Some children will avoid kissing their nurse in their mother's

presence, so soon do they acquire the key to the maternal heart !

There is, perhaps, hardly any thing more attractive than the graceful displays of character, the lively and amusing scenes to which these little manoeuvres give rise. In little girls especially, their artifices have so much grace, the caresses which accompany them are so winning, that we find it difficult to consider them in a sufficiently serious light: we laugh at their stratagems — perhaps even relate them before the children themselves; and in so doing are hardly aware what a fatal error we are committing. Such means of obtaining any object, however amusing they may be, should be treated as what they really are, proofs of artifice: for there is no safeguard so great as perfect sincerity; and it is even more necessary to women than to men. Living in dependence, expected to render an account of their conduct to him who is their earthly guide and master, if this account be not faithful, he is no longer able to direct them; they elude obedience, and all the relations of life are confounded.

But of what importance to every one is truth of character! The influence of this quality on every branch of morality is so great and so well known, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it. Falsehood and vice are always found in close

connection. We first learn to dissemble because we have done wrong, and then continue to do wrong because we have learnt to dissemble. No one will dispute these assertions ; they are, indeed, generally acknowledged maxims. Every one admits that sincerity is the guarantee of every other virtue.

By obliging your child, therefore, to adhere strictly to the truth, you secure his moral existence : an existence of far more importance than his physical one ; an existence, the loss of which destroys our peace of mind, and reduces us to the most humiliating state of uneasiness. Nor can any one relieve his mind by imparting this secret trouble, the bitter fruit of want of sincerity ; he must be silent as to the pain he feels at never being believed, never trusted, never placed in the honourable post of confidence. It is a state of mind that can never be disclosed, and the vain pretences resorted to for disguise, only serve to betray its existence.

Conscientious truthfulness is not of spontaneous growth ; it has to be implanted ; and it cannot be implanted and cultivated too early. In order to do this, we must begin by making children understand, as soon as possible, that their words must agree, not with their own wishes, or those of others, but with facts ; a thing which they would seldom discover if left to themselves. In relating to them the circumstances

of any event, in which they have been actors or witnesses, let them observe that you are careful to give them a true and faithful narrative. They will very soon be so much impressed by this, that, if you commit the slightest error in your recital, they will, even with a degree of pedantry, correct you. Whenever this is the case, you should, by your warm and sincere thanks, prove to them how much importance you attach to accuracy.

But it is not only their language that must be watched; their little artifices must be disconcerted: they must be seen through, and counteracted; we must show that we are not deceived by them. It is not, indeed, always necessary to come to an open explanation; what cannot be unequivocally proved, should not be made the subject of reproach. If you receive with quiet coolness any caresses which you perceive to be insincere or interested, but return with warm affection such as are real and heart-felt, your child, taught by his own conscience, will not misunderstand your motives. All pretexts whatever should also be treated in this manner: without calling them by this name (however they may deserve it), they will always furnish you with a reason for denial. Exaggerations, boasting, suspicious narratives, must in the same way be listened to in grave silence. Nothing will raise you so much in the estimation

of your child, nothing so certainly secure his respect for your understanding, as the proof you will thus give him of your penetration.

A more pleasing, but equally important object, is to acquire the confidence of your children. Endeavour to lead them to the avowal of their little faults, and always reward their candour with a complete pardon. Remember that, at this early age, the ill effect of such lenity is not to be compared with that of exposing them to the least danger of not acquiring a habit of veracity. Still more carefully should we avoid any thing which may prove a temptation to them to practise deception. Never should we question them as to their past behaviour, as to facts which it is in their power to deny, or feelings which they can disavow: and never, especially, as to the conduct of servants, or other children. Why should we tempt them to betray others? Why place their frail virtue under the necessity of either bringing forward accusations, or telling untruths?

Every trial is dangerous to sincerity; it is a disposition which flourishes best in a tranquil season, and during calm weather. We are so constantly obliged to speak the truth on all ordinary occasions; and even amongst those who have little value for it, the proportion of lies is of necessity so small, that, unless hindered by some want of judgment on our part, the habit of

veracity will almost form itself. Such a habit is, perhaps, but a slight security; but, in our endeavours to favour the developement of the conscience, nothing ought to be neglected. Remember that we are now speaking only of the earliest stage of childhood: at a later period, it may be useful to ascertain the secret motives of our pupil by questioning him, or to strengthen his morality by exposure to trials: but, before this most important virtue has taken root, such attempts appear to me calculated only to unsettle it, and impede its growth.

When we have succeeded in making children for a considerable time adhere strictly to the truth, we have acquired an important and powerful instrument, and we may begin to treat them with confidence. Let them see that our esteem is in exact proportion to the correctness of their assertions, and they will soon learn to pay attention to their words. And when they observe that we no longer doubt any thing they relate, that their simple assertion directly produces entire conviction in our minds, the feeling of pleasure, and even dignity, which they experience, will prove to them the value of a faithful adherence to truth.

But, after all, the most essential point is, that we should be perfectly true ourselves. Every other interest must be sacrificed to that of truth. To deceive our children is not only to set them

a pernicious example, but to lose our influence over them for the future ; it is, in fact, to renounce our privilege of directing their education, of which we have disqualified ourselves for being the instruments. Is it not plain that all our influence on the minds of our children is founded on their deep and entire conviction that we are incapable of deceiving them ? And let no one imagine that they will long continue blindly credulous. It is just possible that they might do so, had they no reason to suspect us. But we too frequently do not even take the trouble to conceal from them our violation of our word ; and the act of insincerity which we most commonly practise towards them — that of breaking a promise — is always in the end found out, and forms a fatal epoch in their lives. Almost any fault that we may have committed in the education of our children may be retrieved, except an act of falsehood. We may at times have been impatient, angry, even unjust ; it may have vexed them, but it will be forgotten. Such errors are, in some degree, involuntary ; but an intentional fault is not so easily forgiven. We may, perhaps, have acted from some secret motive, which has, in our own eyes, excused our conduct ; but this motive — unknown, or unintelligible to the child — does not justify it to him. The thing of most importance for him to know is, whether he may at

all times implicitly trust us ; all that he understands of the future is included in this idea. If he have always found us faithful and true, our moral power is unbroken ; but if we have once failed in keeping our word, we are no longer any thing more to him than a mere uncertain, physical power ; the employment of which, as it cannot be depended upon with any certainty, will seldom be taken into consideration. If the idea of duty be not formed in the child's mind, we can influence him only by either hope or fear. Children who have never been deceived believe in a promise as in an absolute fact, and may be guided by a thread ; but, having once been the victims of deception, even chains will not be strong enough to drag them.

And we may thus account for the severity with which the children of the poor are so often treated by their parents : they love their children as well as we do ours, but they see no harm in deceiving them, as they imagine, for their own good. As this, however, puts it out of their power to govern them by words, they have no resource but in punishments ; and these very soon, in spite of their frequency and severity, produce no effect. An unconquerable obstinacy provokes parents who are not accustomed to control their own passions, to real anger ; and hence follows a course of treatment which I forbear to describe. The poor victim of it, finding

himself governed only by a blind and merciless chance, gives up all care about the future. He secures his pleasures by stealth, and, acquiring a feeling of stupid indifference as to the consequences of his actions, remains ignorant alike of morality and of common prudence.

But, suppose a child to have acquired a feeling of duty, and then to find himself deceived, what a revolution, what a complete overturn of his moral existence, must take place ! His father has deceived him ! His own father ! What a terrible and disheartening conviction ! And if he dare not venture to condemn a parent, if he can persuade himself to consider the deception as lawful or necessary, still what confusion must arise in his mind ! One thing alone is quite clear to him, that he can no longer believe any thing. Motives, above his comprehension, will, it seems, justify any conduct of which he is the object. Men, just and honourable with each other, do not think themselves bound to keep faith with such a little wretch as he, either in their words or dealings. An inward sense of degradation is the result of such a persuasion. We may, however, be sure that his moral conduct towards others will be guided by his seeing clearly what theirs is to him.

We cannot render the idea of duty too simple to a child ; we cannot too soon raise the dignity of his soul, by showing that we respect it ; and

that we would never treat his proper feelings with contempt. There may, perhaps, be some danger in exciting by education too strong a feeling of self-esteem ; there may even be some disadvantage in too much exalting the consciousness of moral strength ; but the esteem, the respect, which men, with all their imperfections, may deserve, and which is the natural right of all who have not yet forfeited it, must be fully and entirely granted to children. They are ignorant, weak, and, by the laws of nature, necessarily subjected to our authority ; but they are not the less our equals, our brethren, perhaps even our superiors — nearer than we are to their high origin ; more fresh from the hands of their Maker, more allied to the angelic nature. Feeling themselves innocent, strangers alike to suspicion and to fear, their eyes sparkle with joy, security, and confidence, as long as the purity of their hearts remains unsullied by melancholy experience.

The observation of the most scrupulous truth on the part of the teacher will never fail to produce the same attention to it in the pupil ; and the consequence of this will be his perfect docility. Only a strictly open and truthful system of education can, at the same time, be a gentle one, for there are things which must be insisted on ; and if our words have lost all effect, we have no resource but in violent measures.

This will soon be perceived by a sensible mother, and will be strongly enforced by her on any of whom she may make use as assistants. Nurses, especially, should be most carefully instructed on this point; though this is by no means easily accomplished; for perfect truthfulness, owing perhaps to their defective education and dependent situation, is very rarely to be met with in this class of people. As the means of obviating such a difficulty ought to be taken into consideration, I shall conclude this chapter by expressing my hope that the present age, so fruitful in new institutions, will see the desirableness of founding schools for nurses capable of managing children under six years old. Establishments where persons of this description, sensible, gentle, and strictly true, might be met with, would be a benefit of which all mothers would deeply feel the value.

CHAPTER V.

THE IMAGINATION AT THREE YEARS OLD.

PRECOCIOUS in its developement, and simple in its modes of action, though powerful in its effect, the imagination of children animates, embellishes, and at times disturbs the morning of their life. Preponderating at first over every other faculty, it diminishes by degrees, till at last it bears only that proportion amongst them which seems natural to the inhabitants of our climate.

Two different kinds of intellectual progress may be remarked in children; the development of the mind itself, and the acquisition of knowledge. These alternately assist each other; the faculties, becoming every day more comprehensive, accumulate facts, which in their turn furnish matter for the exercise of the faculties. The spirit of examination is strengthened by multiplied observations: the memory becomes more faithful as more combinations of ideas are formed; the judgment more decided as it compares together a greater variety of objects; but the imagination differs in this

respect from all the other faculties,—its growth and decay are equally rapid and astonishing.

If by the imagination we understand the inward representation of external objects, this faculty has no doubt existed and reigned in the breast of the child from his earliest infancy, and, together with sympathy, has constituted the whole of his moral existence; but whilst shrouded in the clouds of infancy, it could give few outward indications of its presence, and could not display that spirit and vigour, which is afterwards bestowed upon it by an increase of strength. The sallies of imagination are, perhaps, the most striking in children between three and four years old. But, even at that age, they have made many acquisitions; and it is not always easy to distinguish what is the simple effect of nature, from what is the result of these attainments: certain phenomena, however, may be observed, which can be attributed only to the imagination.

Their short lives have not yet enabled them to learn much from experience; their memory has collected only insulated facts, from which they have derived no general laws; nor have they as yet any clear ideas of the order established in the world.

Give a child a box containing a sugar-plum, and he will be continually opening it, to see whether the treasure is still there; hide your-

self behind a curtain, and his joy at seeing you again will prove, not that he would have been surprised at your non-appearance, but that it would have grieved him. The pleasure felt by children often arises from their being unexpectedly delivered from fears, of whose existence we had no previous suspicion. A sort of obscure personification of inanimate objects will frequently strengthen their impressions. They extend this personification, not only to their dolls (though perfectly aware what they really are), but to all their other playthings. Even the furniture, or articles of any kind, of which they are accustomed to make use, seem to them endowed with a kind of animated existence; and the tears which they shed, if they chance to be destroyed, arise not so much from the recollection of their usefulness, as from a more tender feeling associated with them: "Oh, my poor cup!" they exclaim, on seeing its broken fragments — "my poor cup! how I did love it!"

But their imagination goes even farther; they believe that every thing which moves is alive. Wind, thunder, fire, all seem to them voluntary agents — overturning, roaring, burning, at their pleasure. At three years old, children begin to search after causes; if they have ever watched the erection of a building, they will ask who built the mountains, or who dug the lakes. But wherever they observe mo-

tion, they no longer require a cause : the rivers run, and the smoke ascends, without their demanding the reason ; just as a balloon or a kite excites no astonishment in their minds ; imagining them to be alive, this sufficiently accounts for their power of moving. As they judge of every thing by sympathy, the absence of feeling is to them quite incomprehensible.

It is owing to their total ignorance of the laws of nature, and the consequent facility with which they are led to consider the wildest inventions of fancy as realities, that children pursue their amusements with such eagerness and interest. The idea of a multitude of possible chances keeps them in a state of constant agitation ; and to this may also be attributed their volatile and inconstant disposition. If an attempt have failed, if different combinations have produced no new effect, they become weary ; their imagination is checked, and the objects on which they had bestowed an animated existence once more become mere material substances.

The pleasure with which children listen to the recital of the most simple stories, is owing to the lively pictures which they form in their own minds ; they see things as in a magic lantern, and often represent them as more brilliant and more highly coloured than the original objects. We need not, therefore, task our invention much in order to amuse them. Take a child for your

hero or heroine, add a cat, a horse, or any thing else of which they can form an image, be animated in your manner ; your little auditor will listen with earnest attention, and the interest you excite will be intense. Every time that he sees you he will make you repeat the story ; but take care not to alter it in the slightest degree. He wishes to represent to himself exactly the same scene ; and the least circumstance either added or omitted will dispel the illusion which afforded him so much pleasure.*

We are often surprised at the satisfaction which children derive from very coarse imitations, and are apt to despise their deficiency of taste in matters of art, though we ought rather to admire that power of imagination which makes such an illusion possible. Take a piece of wax, mould it into any sort of a figure, or cut one out in paper ; and provided that there is some appearance of arms and legs, and a round knob at the top for a head, your workmanship

* We can readily understand why omissions are unpleasant to children ; but why is it that additions are often equally disagreeable to them ? A few more details ought not to throw doubt over the reality of the narrative. But the reason is, that the facts already related have passed in review in their minds, and with accompanying circumstances which differ from those in the altered story. They have formed for themselves a picture of the localities, figures, dress, &c. This picture is destroyed, and they regret its loss.

will, in the eyes of the child, be a man ; and even, though it may lose a limb or two, it will remain a man for weeks, and be made to act any part that its possessor chooses. The fact is, that the child sees, not this wretched imitation, but the model which he has in his own imagination. The figure is only a symbol ; it may be badly executed and worthless, but this is of no consequence ; his young mind pierces through the veil, perceives the object itself, and views it in its true form and colour.

This power is displayed at a very early age. I have seen a child of not more than eleven months old, recognise a very small dog in an engraving ; and a few months later than this, all children are amused with prints ; and yet neither form, nor size, nor colour, can be accurately represented on a flat surface, covered with innumerable black lines. A little girl of eighteen months old will bestow the greatest care on her doll ; she puts it to bed, feeds it, protects it from cold, educates it, scolds it, and at times shows, though in rather a rude way, that she interests herself also in its moral character. Yet she is perfectly aware that this is all *make-believe*. It is a truly dramatic pleasure, arising from a voluntary delusion, which takes strong hold of the mind, though without any real deception.

The more lively the imagination of children,

the more pleasure are they capable of receiving. They delight in picturing to themselves things differing from those which they see, and revel in the fictions of their own fancy. Playthings of their own invention amuse them far more than ready-made toys: imitations of real things, if too exact, soon meet with the fate of any other wearying pleasure. They are admired and valued at first; but their form, too nearly resembling reality, affords no scope to the imagination; it is the representation of an individual, and yields therefore only one amusement: and what child will be satisfied with this? A figure of a soldier in full uniform can be nothing but a soldier; it cannot represent by turns the child's father, or brother, or any one else whom he may call upon. How much more originality does his young mind display, when, inspired by the imagination of the moment, he puts every thing within his reach in requisition in order to accomplish his wishes, and sees in all around him only the instruments of his pleasure! A stool turned wrong side up is a boat or a gig; placed on its legs again, it becomes a horse or a table. A pasteboard box may be a house, a cupboard, a coach—any thing in the world. We should be careful to cultivate and assist this talent for inventing playthings, by giving to our children, even before they are old enough for rational

toys*, the means of making things, rather than the things themselves. Some thick pieces of wood in the shape of books, which may be placed one upon another in different directions, are excellent materials for building; and if a hole be bored in each of them, so that they can be strung together with ribands, the child will have still more scope for his inventive powers. Children, while very young, are also made perfectly happy, by having a quantity of sand or bran to play with; they will make dinners with it, fancy it land and water, or a variety of other things. With such simple materials, capable of becoming any thing suggested by the fancy of the moments, they will procure for themselves a constant variety of pleasures.

In fact, the whole life of these little creatures is a drama — a pleasing and lengthened dream, purposely kept up and prolonged; inventors, decorators, and actors, by turns, their amusements are all in the region of fiction, and, were it not for their childishness, they would all be poets. A few anecdotes will illustrate what I have said, and prove the power of the imagination at this early period.

* See Miss Edgeworth's admirable chapter on "Toys," in the "Practical Education." To the hints suggested in this chapter, are the children of the present generation indebted for all their most delightful amusements. — *Note by Translator.*

A child of about two years and a half old, whom I know, amuses himself every day by acting the part of a coachman. Two chairs are his horses, he makes a harness for them himself of ribands, and seated behind on a third chair, the reins in one hand, and a whip in the other, he drives his quiet steeds. A slight balancing of his body shows that he imagines them to be going on. By degrees this motion becomes less, he sinks into a state of repose almost amounting to sleep, but the illusion still continues ; should any one, however, place himself before the chairs, the inmoveableness of the object, by undeceiving him, destroys all his pleasure—he is in despair, becomes angry, and cries out, that “they prevent his horses going on.”

The same child occupies himself regularly every day in feeding imaginary poultry, with imaginary corn. He begs that the door of the room where he keeps them may be left open ; and if it is not, he begins to cry, and complains that “they will not let his poor ducks and hens come out.”

A gentleman one day imagined, from what he heard through the window, that his children were shooting with bows and arrows in the garden. One was appointed judge to decide on the relative merit of the shots ; the others appealed to his decisions ; they disputed and talked loudly, ap-

plauding the victors, and laughing at the unskilful. Their father began to be uneasy, wondering how they had procured these dangerous playthings, and fearing lest they should hurt themselves. To satisfy himself he went down into the garden, and there found them with heightened colour and eager countenances displaying that earnest animation which is always produced by great pleasure. The whole pantomime was perfect; but there were no bows, no arrows, no target — a wall was the only material, from which, assisted by their imagination, all this amusement was extracted.

A real and deep feeling is often found to be associated with such illusions in the minds of children; and there is something quite touching in the affection which a little girl sometimes shows towards her doll. Even at four years old, if she let her favourite fall, and unhappily its nose be broken, her despair, her tears, are really distressing; and they are redoubled if a thoughtless father, not imagining the affair to be so very serious, laughs at her, and trying to mend the poor face, buries the rest of the maimed nose in an enormous hole. The child's grief is then mixed with anger, and becomes so violent as to be alarming. They contrive, however, to calm her; they take away the doll, promising to cure it; and at length the poor little creature, overcome by fatigue, falls asleep.

Advantage is taken of this time to send the doll to be mended ; a beautiful new face is substituted for the old one, and it is fully expected that the child, on awaking, will be satisfied and even delighted. But this is far from being the case ; her grief, as lively as ever, has only assumed a more tender and distressing character. It is no longer passion ; it is the sorrow of a true mother, to whom they have dared to offer another child instead of her own. Sobs impede her utterance as she exclaims, " Oh, it is not my own doll ! I knew it before, and now I do not know it all : I shall never like it — take it away, — I won't look at it."

Those who have the care of sick children in hospitals often find them more gentle and more patient than older people. A little girl who was obliged to have her leg taken off, submitted to the operation without a groan, holding her doll fast in her arms. When the surgeon had finished the amputation, he said laughingly, " Now I will cut off your doll's leg ;" but the poor child, who had suffered so much without a word of complaint, at this cruel proposal burst into a flood of tears.

Carried beyond a certain point, however, illusion ceases to be voluntary with children ; they can no longer, at their will, strip it of its disguise, and a feeling of alarm arises. Beginning to doubt whether it be joke or earnest,

they imagine themselves entering on an unknown world, full of frightful realities. If you take rather a large doll, and dance it up and down before a child of two years old, it will be delighted as long as you do this gently; but if you make it dance more violently, moving its arms about at the same time, the child will still laugh, perhaps even more loudly than before; but it will cling to its mother, and betray its inward feelings either by an unusual paleness, or a heightened colour. Those who have a knack at making faces often amuse themselves with the effect they produce on children; but it may soon be seen that, unless the child recognize continually the natural face of the person, in the intervals between the grimaces, his pleasure is of a very doubtful nature. If these be continued without interruption, and especially if any particular one be preserved for a length of time, he becomes alarmed: the idea of a metamorphosis, of a frightful confounding of two persons in one, takes possession of his imagination; and he is uneasy and afraid, though he hardly knows of what.

We are too apt to forget, or to overlook, the effect of complete ignorance. What we have often seen we call natural; and we do not sufficiently consider that to children, who have seen nothing, every thing is equally natural and equally possible. As soon as an idea is presented

to them, their imagination clothes it with a real living form; and a vague sentiment of fear will often raise images of terror in their minds.

When we reflect on the vivacity of their imagination, on the weakness of their young nerves, and on the ease with which they are excited, we ought most carefully to avoid imposing on their credulity. By so doing we also avoid the danger of making them weak, idiotic, and liable to continual terror, and of thus rendering their future life miserable. Even without going so far as this, there is no doubt that the influence of fear on the moral character is very great. It makes children cowardly, hypocritical, and sometimes treacherous; besides exposing them to rush on to destruction on the slightest real danger. It seems strange that it should still be necessary to repeat these things: for Rousseau, Mrs. Hamilton, and Mr. Friedlander, have each in their respective works employed all the resources of reason, eloquence, and even science, on this subject. But it would seem as if it were so impossible completely to establish any one point in this inexhaustible subject of education, that we may go on for ever repeating the same truths.

Happily the imagination of children, though abundantly active and lively, is not inventive. If left to themselves they may be afraid of real objects, such as a negro, a chimney-sweeper, or a

person in a mask ; and they may afterwards recal the recollection of them with feelings of dread ; but they do not often create fanciful chimeras. Seldom does an idea occupy their minds unless it has been suggested to them ; and it is therefore generally easy to discover the source of their terrors ; but when the evil has once taken root, completely to eradicate it is no easy task.

In order to succeed in this, we must study human nature. We shall most commonly find that, where the evil exists, it shows itself in the shape of some phantom or other, whose appearance fills the poor child with horror ; and therefore the thing of most consequence is to avoid raising this dreaded phantom. Reasoning is useless : you may talk to the child about the improbability of any danger, the disadvantages of fear, and the glory of courage ; but you may be sure that all this time the object of his terror is before his eyes, and that the more you talk about it, the more you impress upon him the idea of its real existence. Experience has proved that it is of no use, at any age, to argue in a direct manner against the errors of the imagination. Let the ruling idea fade away — drive out one feeling by another, different, and more powerful in its nature ; endeavour to divert the child's thoughts, or to interest his mind : to make use in this way of both moral and physical means is the best remedy against

fear in general. But, when we are aware of the existence of some one particular subject of dread, the wisest plan is to present to children the real object, that it may assume the place of that terrifying image of it which they have formed in their imagination. They do not picture in their minds what they actually see; and the reality, however disagreeable or disgusting in itself, produces a tranquillizing effect on the senses. This method, if it can be adopted, is the most efficacious of any, but it requires to be used with some caution.

In fact, any new terror, any shock communicated to the nerves, will retard the cure for an indefinite time, and we must not hazard much in this way. Rousseau recommends playing at night, in order to accustom children to the dark; but it appears to me that amusements which lead them to forget their fear are better than those which induce them to brave it. We must not always trust to their noisy laughter: such loud bursts frequently arise from a forced or feigned gaiety, from a feeling of stunning amazement, and seldom perhaps leave behind them the recollection of much pleasure. For this reason any startling surprises — such, for instance, as imitations of the noises of wild beasts — are dangerous. Children, from the avidity with which they seek for excitement of any kind, may earnestly desire the repetition of terrifying stories

or scenes; but such a taste should be gratified only with the utmost discretion; for it is not always easy to discover whether we are encouraging the habit of fear, or forming that of courage.

One peculiarity of the childish imagination is, that it is occupied only with the present: in this respect how different from ours, which is continually glancing backwards, or darting forwards, reviewing the past, or anticipating the future. Children, on the contrary, have forgotten the next morning what happened the evening before; and a fault then committed is to them like any other fact to which they never think of referring. They rise every morning with the feeling of innocence, and think themselves justified from all past faults when they say, "Oh! that was yesterday."

Yet propose to them something pleasant, and likely soon to take place, and they will voluntarily think of the future; and we shall find them reckoning up exactly the time which is to intervene before the joyful event takes place. Promises too, if well defined, have great influence over them. But it is not so with threats; — any distant evil is nothing to them: they do not believe beforehand in any thing disagreeable, but dismiss the idea at once, saying, "Oh! that will not be for a long time." In a healthy and natural state of mind, they understand hope,

but not fear. So much care has their Heavenly Father taken to secure their happiness !

When we consider the pleasures of children, so animated, and so easily obtained ; their tendency to live only in the present, which by our love may so easily be turned to their advantage ; — their inexhaustible gaiety — their hearts, open to every kind of enjoyment, but closed against care and grief ; — who can refuse to believe that it is by the especial care of Providence that these little creatures are made so contented and happy ? And if, as a celebrated writer has asserted, nothing is so favourable to the growth of virtue as an atmosphere of happiness, may we not presume that the Supreme Ruler of the world, in bestowing this long period of happiness on the child, has intended to promote and cultivate the future morality of the man ?

This leads us to the examination of the peculiar character given by the dispositions we have just been examining to the first glimmerings of conscience ; which will form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE CONSCIENCE BEFORE FOUR YEARS OLD.

NOTHING perhaps at first sight appears more inconsistent, or more changeable, than the moral feeling of children of three years old. Yet this feeling exists; and will display itself even at that age, if the passions be not excited. Children have a distinct idea of right and wrong, though they are unable to express this idea in general terms. They acknowledge a law common to all;—a tacit agreement which all are required to respect. If their attention have been drawn to the circumstances, any violation of truth, any trenching on the right of property, or on the enjoyment of others, distresses their feelings, though they may not themselves be sufferers from it. But it is difficult to determine the point at which they become interested, without their passions being excited; nor is it always easy to obtain a just decision from them, on account of the difficulty of fixing their attention, and their tendency to partiality.

In fact, the natural inclinations of children seldom allow them to judge coolly. Continually

led away and excited by some temporary emotion, prepossessed in favour of themselves, or of those whom they love; at one time thinking only of their own interest, and at another devoting themselves entirely to that of others, they are not very likely to be impartial in their judgment. The evil inclinations of their hearts may indeed be overcome by their good feelings; but we see distinctly marked in their conduct the fickle and uncertain nature of our two most dazzling and amiable qualities, imagination, and sympathy.

The emotion of pity, so interesting in itself, is often capricious in children. Sometimes they are moved by it to tears, to distress, and even to the sacrifice of their greatest pleasures; while at others they seem entirely inaccessible to the feeling. Every thing displeasing to them tends to harden their hearts. If a beautiful animal be hurt, they will sympathize warmly in its pain; but, if the suffering creature be ugly, they turn away with disgust. Their compassion vanishes as soon as any defect (such as deformity of person), or any feeling of ridicule, makes them indisposed to associate themselves with the sufferer. Such, even at a more advanced age, is the instability of sympathy as a foundation for the firm structure of morality!

From the nature of this feeling it follows that every action, not directly producing pain to an

individual, will appear innocent to children. Hence it is that they do not hesitate to commit petty thefts, when they suppose that the things stolen will not be missed. Yet there is one duty which they fully acknowledge, when the idea of it has once been conceived by them, — that of obedience towards the person on whom they depend.

I have before said, that there is always some one to whom an affectionate child believes himself particularly to belong. Feeling more closely connected with this individual than with any other, he also feels responsible to him for his conduct. From any other less certain authority, he frees himself as he best can; but the reproaches of one, whom he acknowledges as his true master, are deeply felt by him. This master it is who stands to him in the place of conscience; whose judgment, already foreseen, must condemn or absolve him; and whom he sees in imagination when the moment of temptation arrives. Often, indeed, he so completely brings him before his mind's eye, that, by the natural effect of a strong illusion, he believes that he is observed by him. He is not astonished when this acknowledged and lawful governor is aware of actions committed by him when out of his sight; for at this age there is nothing repugnant to his understanding in the idea of an invisible witness. And if, from for-

getfulness or wickedness, the child has yielded to temptation, he is touched with remorse at the sight of this representative of his conscience. He would have met without emotion the owner of the flowers or fruit he may have taken, but his face is covered with blushes when he encounters one whom he considers as his moral ruler ; to him he avows his fault, with touching and affecting explanations, and towards him he feels the desire, so natural to a guilty conscience, of making some expiation for his crime ; and will even sometimes voluntarily inflict on himself a punishment.

I have said that sympathy alone is not a sufficiently solid foundation for morality ;— but it is certainly one of its strong supports during the period of infancy. The love and respect felt by a child for his parents by degrees become associated in his mind with the laws which they impose ; their judgment assumes an independent authority, and he begins to form a more definite idea of duty. And when he sees that his parents are themselves governed by the same laws ; that these laws are obeyed by all around him ; and, above all, when he feels that they are in harmony with the intimations which he begins to receive from his conscience, his conduct becomes more and more within the pale of morality.

One obstacle to the progress of children

consists in their having no idea of time ; the non-existence to them either of the past or the future excludes all regrets and all fears ; and, whilst the knowledge of the consequences of an action forms a powerful auxiliary to our conscience, children, on the contrary, not perceiving how one event influences another, attach no importance to their determinations. Their volatile impressions are at the mercy of every wind which blows ; their recollections, to which they seldom refer, soon fade away : and, if past events occasionally remain in their memory, the motives which led to them are for ever forgotten. Hardly conceiving themselves the same beings, they do not consider themselves responsible to-day for the actions committed yesterday.

Hence it follows that the sooner children can be made to understand the necessary connection between the past and the present, the sooner will their moral and rational existence be established. I say the connection between the past and present, because it is with these that we must begin. The influence of preceding events on those which follow is obvious and easily shown ; while the future, at all times uncertain, appears particularly so to children. They soon become weary of our warning predictions ; but if we show them clearly that the events of each day depend on those of the preceding one, they

will themselves soon learn to carry such connection forward into futurity.

We may then remark that very young children, yielding to the impulse of their first impressions, have glimmerings of morality, though they can hardly yet be considered as moral creatures. In every thing concerning them we observe the want of reflection. They form for themselves no general rule, nor, when such a rule has been explained to them, do they apply it to themselves; their inward will remains unexercised. Not deserving either to be despised for their faults, or to be esteemed for their good actions, they may be more or less agreeable or interesting to us; they may, like the brute creation, be naturally attractive in their dispositions, or the contrary; but we cannot reasonably consider them responsible for their conduct, or condemn them for their errors.*

Such being the condition of the mind at this very early age, will our observations justify us in concluding that a tendency to evil is necessarily attached to the moral constitution of young children? If we except a general propensity to refer every thing to self (at first hardly to be distinguished from another feeling, necessary indeed, but always too strong — preference of

* Several pages have here been omitted by the translator, containing a discussion on the often disputed doctrines of the depravity of human nature, and the nature of evil.

self to others), we do not find any one failing common to all children. No one vicious inclination necessarily governs them: many, however, lie dormant in their hearts; and some one may generally be detected, which is more easily awakened than any other. It is easy to discover a dangerous bias in every character; but we may, by our watchfulness, weaken, or counteract, such hurtful propensities before they become fixed habits.

The essential point, then, in education, next to the cultivation of good feelings (on which I have already dwelt), is to correct the progress of evil inclinations, by not allowing them the opportunity of displaying themselves in repeated actions, and of thus giving rise to faults which we may afterwards find it very difficult to correct. Hence we see how desirable it is to form some previous idea of those impulses which ought to be repressed: and amongst these there is one, almost too transient to be called a propensity, yet too frequent in its occurrence, and too fatal in its effects, to be passed over.

I allude to that temporary vitiation of the will which attaches so much pleasure, and gives so keen a relish, to the idea of transgressing any known law. This impulse, whether arising from the action of an evil principle, or from a misdirected instinct of independence, has been so often remarked in men, as well as children, as to have given rise to the proverbial expression

by which we denote our taste for forbidden fruit. In fact, we may observe in children something beyond mere weakness of purpose — something more than mere want of power to submit to the sacrifices which duty requires : they have an actual pleasure in throwing off its yoke. To rebel against every regulation, even against that law of justice which is engraved on their hearts, seems in them hardly an unnatural impulse. There are times, which may be called the Saturnalia of evil thoughts, when human beings of all ages are seized with a sort of wild intoxication, and their long-subdued desires regain the mastery. At such times, scenes of commotion and of violence, the suffering or the humiliation of others, disorder and confusion, evil, in short, of any kind, seems to become the element in which the soul delights to riot. This most dangerous condition of things will sometimes occur in spite of our most watchful care ; but by the aid of reason, and still more of religion, we may prevent its frequent recurrence. A little girl, of whom I have before spoken, — a child so docile and gentle that she appeared in general to find an absolute pleasure in obedience, would yet at times seem to take delight in assuming a totally opposite character. At eighteen months old, one might observe in her mind a double feeling, impelling her both to obey and to brave existing laws. Being one

day left alone with her mother, who was confined to bed by illness, she entered, without the slightest perceptible motive, into open rebellion. Gowns, bonnets, screens, every thing which came in her way, were thrown on the floor in the middle of the room. The little creature kept singing and dancing round the heap with indescribable joy, paying no attention to her mother's serious remonstrances. She knew she was doing wrong: her heightened colour betrayed the reproaches of her conscience; but her pleasure consisted in stifling its voice.

To the same cause may be attributed that fondness for cruelty which boys, even those who have passed the first stage of childhood, sometimes display in their amusements. Some degree of curiosity no doubt enters into their motives in giving pain to an animal. They wish to see how the poor creature will behave under the torture they are inflicting: but the great charm, the zest of the pleasure, consists in braving the emotion which they feel; in hardening themselves against pity, and having the *courage* to be cruel.

It is with regret that I write these things. When obliged to accuse the hearts of children, my own feelings are wounded. It is impossible not to love these little creatures: it is impossible not to be fascinated, captivated by their charms. An illusion, by which our minds are continually

deceived, would lead us to believe in their perfect purity: but we cannot refuse the evidence of our senses. Frequently, however, as these poor little things offend in their intentions, these intentions are not always accomplished: they wish to dissemble, but do not deceive us: they intend to hurt us, but have not the power: and we are then apt to take their *transparency* for candour, and their weakness for innocence. Besides, they are so easily moved; an impulse of emotion, of sympathy, of unrestrained, undisguised feeling, will so quickly follow a fit of deceit, or selfishness; that we remember only what has rendered them dearer to us than ever. But shall we love them less, or will they have less claim on our pity, because we perceive that they are tainted with the same errors as ourselves?—because we know that they carry about in their breast enemies against whom it is our duty continually to arm them?—because we see them, like the rest of mankind, sinning, sometimes from ignorance, and sometimes against their better knowledge?

This may, perhaps, be called a dangerous doctrine: it may be said that it would afford too many excuses for weakness. But the important point is, to ascertain whether in rejecting it, we should be able to bestow sufficient assistance on this weakness. Nothing is really dangerous except error. It is in vain to hope that morality

can be formed from any other elements than those of human nature ; or, that if such a structure could be raised, it would be lasting. If we are not previously assured of the solidity of the ground on which we have built, — if the edifice have been erected on the deceitful foundation of natural purity, then “when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat against that house, it will fall, and great will be the fall thereof.”

The moral consequences of this doctrine, — a doctrine, in my opinion, so favourable to the developement of the conscience, — will be treated of in a later part of this work. I shall only remark at present, that the Holy Scriptures have pronounced the heart of man to be corrupt ; and that this judgment, taken, as it ought to be, in connection with the general views of Christianity, has one great advantage, in the spirit of gentleness which it infuses into the work of education. Parents who are convinced of their own natural tendency to evil, view the faults of their children without feeling that excessive surprise and indignation, which so frequently lead to severity of treatment : they are already prepared to encounter those foreseen tendencies, and have not lulled themselves into a deceitful security. And, on the other hand, children, easily convinced of their errors, do not receive their parents' reproofs with a rebellious spirit, a

proud obstinacy, or, an assertion (so often false) of good intentions, as an excuse for their conduct, — faults which serve only to aggravate those previously committed. More gentle, more sincerely penitent when they have done wrong, they are less likely to transgress again; nor do they seek an idle justification of themselves in the idea of the vice inherent in their nature. They had felt themselves free to act or not: and the conviction that they might have resisted the temptation by which they were assailed is too just and too strong to be shaken.

But if we would have our children able to resist temptations, and truly grieved when they have yielded to them, we must endeavour to give them such religious feelings as, at their age, they are capable of imbibing. This most important subject remains to be considered in the concluding part of this volume.

CHAPTER VII.

ADVANTAGES OF AN EARLY CULTIVATION OF THE
RELIGIOUS FEELINGS.

IN treating of education I have hitherto been reasoning on the subject, recommending observation, and calling in the aid of experience. Perhaps, in bringing forward the subject of religion, I may be accused of a blind enthusiasm. Though long wishing to arrive at this part of my task, yet now, that I have accomplished my intention of beginning by drawing a portraiture of infancy, an undefinable dread seems to restrain me. I am confused and overwhelmed by the greatness of the subject, and my mind is pre-occupied by the feebleness of the age of which I am treating. How can I venture to express the desire I feel? How dare to advise that we should present to the confined intellect of a child of three or four years old, that Being who transcends the comprehension even of the most enlarged capacity?

But in the contemplation of such a Being, all idea of any common measure vanishes. When compared with immensity, every thing is reduced to the same level. Who but God him-

self can understand God ! Men, angels, children — we can only prostrate ourselves before Him.* To adore Him, to bless Him, to obey his holy laws, to submit to his immutable decrees, dimly to view his perfections without being able to see them in all their brightness ; such must be our lot in time and in eternity.

In many respects children are happily constituted for the fulfilment of this universal duty. Not bound down, as we are, by fixed habits, their connection with earth is not so intimate. They can believe in what is unseen ; they can love, without having any very definite idea of the object of their love. A marked gravity is sometimes depicted on their countenances, though they are as yet unable to express themselves by words. Their whole language is that of prayer ; feeling more strongly than we do the sense of their weakness, they also feel more strongly their need of help, while at the same time their filial affection is more warm and lively. What then is wanting to bring them near to God ? Religion already slumbers in their breast ; requiring, not to be brought into existence, but only to be awakened.

The human soul is naturally religious. This may be observed even in the earliest infancy,

* “ Worms, angels, men, in every different sphere,
Are equal all, for all are nothing here.”

Mrs. Barbauld's Address to the Deity.

but it is the part of education, and, doubtless, her most important task and indispensable duty, to bring this dormant faculty fully to light.

To unfold the most noble instinct of human nature, and give it a true and healthy direction, to bestow upon our children by degrees, and in proportion to their progress, suitable religious instruction, must be our constant aim; and this care, in itself so pleasing, will, if begun sufficiently early, be rewarded by certain success. But the longer we are in beginning, the more uncertain and difficult of attainment will this success, otherwise so infallible, become.

It appears sometimes as if parents were deterred, by a sort of reverence for holy things, from introducing the subject of religion to their children before they are capable of reasoning. There might be some excuse for such a scruple, if those, who profess to be influenced by it, were not exempt from it with regard to many other things, for which they also profess a great respect. We hear of no such scruples when the question concerns any other, necessary or even merely praiseworthy, feeling. In order to render the name of father dear and sacred to your son, do you wait till he is of an age to comprehend the exact nature of this relationship? Is the name of his country never mentioned to him with love and pride, till he is able to form an idea of his connection with it,

and duties towards it, as a citizen? You would not choose that your child should be brought up without any feelings of gratitude towards his country, and yet you are tacitly preparing for him the possibility of being ungrateful to his God!

In the religious education of our children two distinct objects must be kept in view; one to inspire them with devotional feeling, the other to enable them to defend this feeling against those who would destroy it by denying the existence of the Being who is its object. Our aim must, no doubt, be to attain both these objects; but it is not necessary to attempt to reach both at the same time: and by waiting for the most favourable moment of accomplishing the latter, we may have lost the opportunity of securing the former. We have no incredulity to deal with in children. It is useless to overwhelm them prematurely with arguments; this would only be giving them false knowledge; that is to say, knowledge which though true in itself, is not so ~~as it regards them~~, because they are not capable of appreciating the correctness of the principles on which it is founded. And this will continue to be the case long after the most favourable time for influencing the feelings has passed away.

It must be owned that we are here opposed by a difficulty which disturbs the systematic

order of our plan of education. When we wish to establish certain truths, we should naturally begin by laying down principles, and then explaining the inferences which may be deduced from them; and when we wish to communicate certain feelings, we should attempt to give our children an exact idea of the object for whom these feelings are to be excited, in order that they may learn not to bestow their affections without reason. We may, perhaps, imagine that if *we* had assisted at the creation of moral beings, we should have managed things differently; the reasoning powers should have been the first developed, and no feelings should have been cultivated without their sanction. But Heaven has not so arranged matters. Children love before they can form a judgment; the order in which their faculties unfold themselves is not according to the rules of logic, any more than the manner in which ideas enter into their head; nor are these ideas connected together by them in the same way that we should connect them. This is troublesome no doubt; but what must we do? Shall we allow the fairest gifts of heaven to fade away from a blind attachment to our own ideas of order? In every thing that regards the feelings we are too apt to fall into this error. But we might as well ask whether religion is necessary to men, as whether it is so to children.

I would go farther and say, that so far from its being necessary to wait for the age of reason in order to inspire a child with feelings of piety, I should not, even when he has attained that age, attempt to begin with argumentative reasoning. Only let the fundamental truths of religion be brought forward as facts, and mentioned with simplicity and reverence, and they may safely be left to their own power, and will not fail of producing conviction. But if these important subjects are introduced by discussions, proofs, refutations of supposed objections, we give at first an unhappy direction to the thoughts; a direction but too frequently occurring, not easily changed, and which tends to hinder the developement of true religious feeling, and to make that an exercise of the understanding which ought to be the devotion of the heart.

If it were only then to avoid this danger, we ought to begin the religious education of our children before the age of reason arrives. But let me not be misunderstood; I have not the slightest apprehension that the strongest and most enlightened reason could, by any possibility, shake the foundations of such an education. As regards this, indeed, we are encouraged by the progress of knowledge itself; for independently of the religious spirit which has been awakened in the present age, philosophy has

taken such a commanding station, that incredulity is forced to retire before it. We may be sure that we shall hereafter obtain the assent of reason, but we must take care that there is something prepared to corroborate that assent, and to be corroborated by it; and we must remember that the religion which is confined to the head, is as useless for the regulation of our conduct, as it is insufficient for our happiness.

The true object then of a religious education is to teach the young soul to enter into communion with God: for the feeling of such a communion, however it may have been abused by enthusiasm, is nevertheless the very essence of religion. Unless we are persuaded that our appeal will be heard, unless we hope that an answer, though perhaps a silent one, will be obtained, and are convinced that a blessing descends upon the incense of prayer, there can be nothing consoling or reviving in our devotion; or rather there can be no devotion at all, and the insulated soul will soon cease to offer up a useless homage.

To enable us to establish this inward sacred connection, and to produce this feeling of communion, we must have recourse to the Gospel: here we find the only known and certain road opened to us: here alone we find succour. It is Jesus Christ, our mediator, intercessor, and redeemer, who has in various ways removed the

obstacles which human nature opposes to the growth of religion in our hearts. Placing himself in the immense interval which separates finite beings from an infinite God, which divides the unhappy from the source of happiness, and the wicked from eternal holiness, he leads our hearts nearer to God, and brings the great Creator within the reach (if we may so speak) of the humblest of his creatures. The innumerable multitude of human beings, to whom the language of the more cultivated is as a foreign tongue, are yet able to understand another language, spoken by a voice inviting all. Ignorance, — infancy, the whole human race, hear and obey the call. Wherever the dispositions so peculiar to children, — love, confidence, submission, — are found, Jesus Christ offers himself as our guide. In the words, “Suffer little children to come unto me,” he seems to have revealed to us, not only our duty as parents, but the general spirit of the religion which he taught.

If then, the distinguishing character of Christianity, and the means of instruction with which we are furnished by the Holy Scriptures, both allow us to inspire our children with the love of God, shall we not use this privilege? Do we not perceive that this feeling, if implanted early, must become deeply rooted in the heart? If the commence-

ment of religion can be dated, if its origin be not lost amid the mists of infancy, if there are any recollections of a previous period, it is no longer the inseparable companion of existence itself. Of all the ideas connected with it, that which tends the most to purify the heart,— the persuasion of the constant presence of God — no longer possesses both the permanence of an unbroken habit, and the depth of a continually renewed impression. It is indeed possible that through the medium of terror we might succeed in inspiring this feeling at a later age: but it would in that case most likely assume an inauspicious character. It is in the happy period of infancy, when all nature seems to smile upon us, when all our fellow creatures love and protect us, that the idea of a God who loves and protects us easily takes possession of the soul. And can there be a greater blessing than such an idea? Can it ever be sufficiently appreciated? Can we estimate too highly the value of a hope which is never exhausted, which points out to us a brighter world beyond this, a celestial perfection above all human perfection, a happiness more pure and more unbounded than any thing of which we can here form an idea, and which even persuades us that evils themselves are intended for our good? “Though he slay me,” says Job, “yet will I trust in Him.” Where this feeling exists, solitude, exile, old

age, death, no longer exist: God is present, He sustains us, He hears us, He speaks to us, He encourages us: and though the danger be great, imminent, and inevitable; though the shades of death may surround us, He will receive us into his bosom. When this feeling prevails, it tinges every thing with a softly coloured light; an atmosphere of love is diffused over all nature; men, animals, even the material creation, plants, rivulets, mountains, every thing is loved; every thing is the work of God; every thing speaks a language which tells us that He is our father; and the peace and happiness which He breathes into our souls declare this to us in still stronger language.

To expect, with Rousseau, that the impression produced by a sudden surprise, or a theatrical scene, will be equal to the power of long recollections and early habits shows little knowledge of the human heart. A thousand unforeseen circumstances may arise and cause the scene to lose its intended effect; and, even should it succeed, the impression produced by it will be but transient. The stream of life will return to its accustomed course, and any religious ideas will be swept away in its current: while, on the contrary, if these ideas have been associated with all the recollections of infancy, they are continually brought back to us by the course of life. Besides, what is thus introduced into the

mind will never be real Christianity, nor will it ever prove a truly influential religion.

We should never lose sight of the truth, that religion must be the acting, ruling, principle in all things. Considered in this light, we see how essential it must be, both to prevent the formation of adverse principles, and to bring under its control even such as have generally a favourable tendency. Thus the fear of censure, worldly honour, self-interest taken in its right sense, the desire of useful exertion, every honourable feeling which favours in general religious energy, should grow under its shade. These, encouraged as auxiliaries, are good and useful, and have their specific place in the various occurrences of life: but each of them contains a latent poison which will speedily become active, unless its influence be either resisted or counteracted.

Hitherto I have addressed myself to those parents only who fear lest their children should not be sufficiently religious. I would now claim the attention of those who fear that too much religion may be introduced into their families, — a fear which can only arise from the subject being considered in a totally false point of view. Religion consists in the love of God, as expressed by our obedience to his will. And since it is the will of God — engraved by Him on our hearts, and still more expressly declared in the

Gospel — that we should fulfil all our duties, it is as impossible that we should love God too much, as it is that we should love too much that good of which He is the eternal source. Christian morality is the only morality deserving the name. Every habitual deviation from the most severe virtue, or from the most scrupulous conscientiousness, presupposes a corresponding want of a truly Christianised spirit: the law always exists to condemn transgressors, and to show that they have violated its principles.

If we honestly examine the faults attributed to those who have lifted on high the banners of Christianity, we shall find that they have generally been owing to the action (necessarily incomplete in its nature) of a regenerating principle amidst a corrupted state of society; and to the struggle in which this principle is constantly engaged, whether in the world, in families, or in the breast of individuals. What does the inconsistency, with which certain self-righteous people have so often been reproached, prove, but the excellence of a doctrine whose purity forms a striking contrast to the weakness of the human heart, and sheds an odious hue on its vices? What does the hypocrisy, of which pretended devotees are guilty, prove, but that the reality of the Christian virtues is so generally acknowledged, that it is advantageous to assume even the exterior of piety? What, in short,

does fanaticism, — whatever dread may justly be attached to the word, — what does fanaticism prove, but that religious views possess so much beauty and grandeur, and are accompanied with so much happiness, that a feeling of passionate attachment may be associated with them, notwithstanding their immaterial nature? Let us carefully repress any extravagant feeling, however noble in its origin : but, for the prevention of this kind of excess, we shall find nothing so effectual as a truly Christian education, early begun, and judiciously conducted.

If a feeling, already generally spread among our fellow-creatures, be at the same time so natural that it would be impossible for us to dry up its source, the only certain method of preventing it from becoming too enthusiastic is to direct its course ourselves. You could not, if you would, remove your son from the influences of religion. Religious worship is not confined to “temples made with hands;” constituted as mankind are, a voice of prayer ascends on every side. Poetry, the arts, even the theatre, all present us with images, disfigured though they often be, of celestial things; in every part of the world oppressed weakness has recourse to God; defamed innocence appeals to Him; grief amidst its tears invokes his aid. Can you place your child where emotions so pervading will not agitate his breast? The

strongest impressions are often caused by a sudden stroke which takes the mind by surprise; and we leave a powerful engine to be directed by chance, if we neglect in the first instance to gain possession of it ourselves.

Whether then you desire to preserve your child from the wild errors of fanaticism, or from the desolation of a life without hope, there is only one plan to be pursued;—inspire him with the gentle feelings of a cheerful piety. The religion which has been imbibed in infancy takes its hue from this happy age, and is associated with all its innocent occupations. Thus, connected with both its pleasures and its studies, religion becomes neither gloomy nor bigotted. Intellectual culture and religious culture, proceeding together, follow the same path, and communicate to each other a spirit of rational piety. The whole business of education is rendered more easy. Religious feeling, the inmost feeling of the soul, gives additional energy to the natural affections. Scarcely has religion sprung up in the heart before she begins to perform her office—to connect our children with us in the same manner as she connects us with God; they submit to our authority with a more decided feeling of respect: and even the impression made by our strictness is softened, from their persuasion that we are not in this respect free agents, but that

our necessary severity is the effect of our obedience to the universal law. We are to them the representatives of that Supreme Being whom we adore in common with them; and a certain feeling of sacredness, which no human imperfection can destroy, seems to descend on earthly parents, from the sublime idea of a heavenly Father.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

WITH children, to believe in God and to adore Him, are almost the same thing; faith and religious worship are so closely connected, that if the idea of a Creator be once firmly established, the soul will naturally be excited by it to expressions of gratitude and love. But as these two objects may be considered separately, it will be asked, how are we to make children first acquainted with the existence of God? and I would answer, that the best method we can adopt is to pursue the same plan which God himself has followed in revealing himself to mankind, and to relate to them the different events which have accompanied each successive revelation. "Religion," says Fenelon, "is altogether historical: its establishment, its perpetuity, every thing which should induce us to believe in it, and to practise it,—all consist in a series of miraculous facts." These words afford us the key of all religious instruction: history furnishes the connecting link by which all eternal truths, whether relating to morality, or faith, are bound together: it gives the mother

an opportunity of explaining these truths ; and, by the pleasure which it affords the child, pre-disposes his mind to receive them.

It is true that some ideas of a more exalted nature,—such as those of the existence of God, his principal attributes, the immateriality of the soul,—seem necessary in order fully to understand the facts related in the Bible. But there are many parts of the sacred history which may be related to children, and understood by them, before they are able to comprehend these sublime truths. We are hardly aware to what extent we often, in the course of education, anticipate the comprehension of children in our explanations to them ; it is frequently much easier to them to guess at the meaning of words or expressions, than to understand our definitions of them. The state of their minds, when any new subject is placed before them, may be compared to a mist clearing away by degrees ; and as the words of which we make use can be explained only by other words, which themselves require an explanation, we feel that we must often trust to the instinct of divination for gradually enlightening their confused ideas.

Still it is our duty as much as possible to assist and develope this instinct. In relating to a child the history of the creation, of a terrestrial paradise, or any other narrative taken from the Bible, you may pause as you mention

the word God, and without alarming him by too direct inquiries, may easily find out what idea he attaches to this sacred name. The interrogative mode of teaching, judiciously employed, leads children not only to discover the truth, but we may almost say to *invent* it. Animated by the pleasure of the discovery, they appropriate to themselves, what has in reality been suggested to them, and preserve as their own property the idea which they have been led to entertain. This mode of teaching, which was practised long ago, and is now very generally employed, is one of the most useful we possess for teaching very young children.

Yet as all are not equally capable of making use of it, and as children of a timid and shy disposition are sometimes rendered unhappy by being forced to answer questions, too much importance must not be attached to this method of instruction. The simple declaration of a truth, whenever an occasion is offered of bringing it forward, will succeed almost as well, provided we possess the art of exciting the curiosity. To interest children is a most essential point. At this age all knowledge must be imperfect, and its greatest value is derived from the recollection of the pleasure associated with its acquisition; for it is this recollection which will hereafter incite the pupil to continue and extend the cultivation of his mind. With regard to

religion especially, it is to be feared that if any early impressions of restraint or weariness have been connected with it, they will remain thus associated for an indefinite time.

I have before stated how much I disapprove of teaching religion by means of proofs or arguments. They should be avoided were it only on this account, that any feeling of religion already existing will be injured by them, and that if not yet in existence, its formation will be retarded. But there is still another reason for not employing them. A proof necessarily implies a doubt; and has often the power of raising one, without being able to dispel it. Were the truth we seek to establish self-evident, we should not take the trouble to prove it: in order therefore to show the necessity of the proof, the opposite opinion must be placed in a strong light. Hence arises a double task. We must state the error in order to refute it; and we must explain the truth in order to impress it on the mind. But the former is, to say the least, a useless task, and often leaves behind but too strong an impression. For example, if, when we wish to prove the existence of God, we say that the beautiful order which reigns in the universe could not be the work of chance, we bestow a sort of reality and consistency on the imaginary being whom we so designate. We are obliged to make it something, in order to prove that it

is nothing; but, as we have before remarked, the imagination of children is of such a nature, that it is much easier to raise a phantom in their minds than to lay it again.

When we wish to communicate knowledge of other kinds to children, how do we begin? We do not wait for them to understand the demonstration of the proposition, before we tell them that the earth is round; nor do we enter into any discussion as to the validity of historical testimony, before we place in their hands, as a true narrative, the history of past ages: we simply declare facts as such; any inquiry into their accuracy is deferred to a later period. Why should we pursue a different plan with respect to religious instruction? In appearing to submit to the examination of children questions above their comprehension, we deceive them as to the extent of their faculties; and by leading them to decide without sufficient knowledge, we mislead their judgment much more than by merely declaring to them our own conviction of the fact. After all that we can say or do, they will still only believe because we do. However we may pretend to enlighten their faith, it will remain the same,—nothing but a blind and implicit reliance on us, and on our opinions. As it is then only by our persuasion that they are influenced, why make use of a host of arguments, the strength of which they are unable

to appreciate? Why not content ourselves with simply declaring to them such truths as are admitted by the most sublime philosophy?

Yet, without bringing forward proofs as such, we may impress upon the minds of our children that faith which is the strongest of all,—the impossibility of doubting. Show them in every thing around them the effects of the power of God, and you convince them that there is a God. The notion that every thing must have a cause is so inherent in our nature, that children eagerly embrace the idea of an Almighty Creator, whenever they observe that the power of man is limited. The existence of any object, however extraordinary, appears to them only the natural effect of the will of an intelligent being; they see nothing but life, or the effect of life, in the whole world; and they admit with facility the idea of a superhuman agent, when the impossibility of resting satisfied with a human cause is pointed out to them. They ask, not whether there is such an agent, but who he is. It is not therefore necessary to discuss the question of the existence of a Deity — we need only speak of his attributes.

The knowledge of the attributes of God, as they are displayed in the creation, in the heart of man, and in his history, forms an inexhaustible subject of education, and indeed of all science. From a child of three years old, who sees a proof of the goodness of God in the pleasure afforded

by flowers and fruit, up to a Newton, who acknowledges the effect of Almighty wisdom in the regulation of the universe,—every mind, and every faculty of every mind, will find food proportioned to its strength in the study of the attributes of God. This study, the limits of which are enlarged as our views are extended, must at first be adapted to the weakness of the child, and offered to him only as the necessary explanation of such interesting facts as may have attracted his attention.

However unable children may be fully to conceive the grandeur of the moral attributes—the perfections—of God, they are never astonished by them; they recognise with a feeling of reverence the various traces of them on the face of nature. But, like ourselves, they are overwhelmed and confounded by the incommunicable attributes of the Deity,—by his eternity,—his immensity,—and above all, his immateriality. Accustomed to picture to themselves any absent object in the most vivid colours, they have more difficulty than we have in attributing reality to a spiritual being; and our best chance of bringing them to acknowledge the possibility of such an existence, is by first convincing them of the immateriality of the soul. They easily allow that it is not their body, or a part of their body, that loves, or thinks; one might almost imagine that their own confused

notions are in accordance with what we teach them on this subject, so readily do they admit the idea of something spiritual dwelling within them. Immortality, and the hope that the souls of those who die will be re-united in heaven, — inferences naturally arising from this idea — appear as delightful to them as they do to us : they express this feeling as well as they are able, and we observe with pleasure what a powerful source of consolation is thus opened to them. The voice of conscience, which they learn to consider as the voice of God speaking in their hearts, gives them the feeling of a close and intellectual communion between the soul and its Creator. The idea that God is every where present does not surprise them, for, as I have before said, they often imagine themselves followed by the eye of their mother when they do not see her. But it is with more difficulty that they are able to represent to themselves the God of the universe and of nature as a spiritual Being ; the material works of the Almighty appear to them to require a material cause : neither can they understand how the power of the Deity can be exercised at the same time in different places ; and hence sometimes momentary errors will arise, which must be rectified, but to which we must not attach too much importance.

We may here remark, that we possess, in regard to the objects of religion, two faculties

which are mutual opponents; imagination, which is constantly creating for itself new forms and images; and reason, which refuses to acknowledge the reality of these creations. We ourselves, though possessing a maturer reason and a less lively imagination than our children, are yet frequently obliged, in a greater or less degree, to represent to our minds the object of our worship under a material form. All our conceptions here partake of our earthly nature; but it is possible to imagine them freed from this alloy. Our thoughts, penetrating through the clouds from which they cannot disengage themselves, discover celestial objects, and form some idea of their purity in spite of the atmosphere by which they are surrounded. We know that all this mist will hereafter be dispersed; that all these visions, this array of images and figures so constantly intruding upon us, will vanish in the presence of immutable truth. But though we are only human beings, shall we not endeavour to raise our condition as much as possible? We are indeed already ennobled by the mere expectation of a future existence; and our imperfect language, when offered as the sincere expression of devotion and love, harmonizes with the hymns of angels.

We should then feel extreme indulgence towards our children for such errors as we ourselves, with our greatest care, cannot always

avoid. If a childish sally, the natural effect of a lively and fanciful imagination, escape from them, we should quietly set them right, without appearing either angry or amused; nor need we fear, from this seeming levity, that all our previous labour has been in vain. Good feeling will work its way through all the irregularities of childish attention. How many drops are wasted in the process by which falling water at last hollows the rock!

One of the many advantages attending the historical method of teaching religion is, that it satisfies the desire for representations and figures, without exciting any superstitious feelings; at least so long as we confine ourselves to the relations of the sacred writers. Another advantage is, that it supersedes for a long time the necessity of any dogmatical, or theological instruction. The principal articles of belief are included in the narratives of the Old and New Testaments; and under this simple but striking form, all that is most necessary to be believed will be more easily impressed upon the young mind than it could be by any other method. Even at a more advanced age, the dry and uninteresting doctrine of catechisms (at least as they are generally taught in schools) produces little fruit. We oblige children to repeat, word for word, obscure phrases, to which they can attach no corresponding ideas; and this alone would be

enough to dishearten them. Then the serious importance which they find attributed to mere errors of memory alarms them : and the dark clouds in which the truths of religion are enveloped in these lessons, produce a mixture of fear and weariness, from which they are impatient to be delivered. Can the advantage of any formula be so great as to compensate for the evil effects of such impressions? In fact, the more we consider doctrines to be useful, the more we consider them to form an essential part of religion, the more necessary does it become that they should be associated with facts, which alone interest children.

Some very good and pious instructors have indeed asserted that they have taught the most abstract truths to children with success : but has not this success been owing rather to their piety than to the method they have pursued? They influence their pupils by the feeling with which they are themselves animated, and involuntarily inspire them with a portion of their own fervour.

The great power of sympathy, the facility with which one spark kindles another in the minds of children, shows how much they must be influenced by the female mind : and by the possession of such influence woman's station in life is ennobled. On her the religion of future generations depends ; her prolonged influence may

establish feelings of piety in the breasts of her daughters, and may leave in the minds of her sons, who are sooner separated from maternal superintendence, recollections and impressions which will never be entirely effaced. She cultivates those dispositions, of which the seeds have been sown by God himself.

The method we should adopt in order to make religion pleasant to children, and at the same time to associate with it ideas of morality, is so well described in an English work, entitled, "A Practical View of Christian Education in its Early Stages," that I make no apology for extracting a few passages from it.

"But how, some parents may ask, can the infant affections be engaged on the side of God and duty, at so tender an age? It seems to us impossible.

"Believe me much may be done with very young children, by placing gradually before them, with cheerfulness and affection, and in a spirit suited to the occasion, religious truths, associated as much as may be with images pleasing to their minds. The appellations God, and Jesus, should soon be made familiar to them; and the dwelling-place of these divine persons may be so pointed out and described; their power and their holiness, and more especially their love, may be so set forth and brought home to the feelings, by little and

simple illustrations, that, while the tender mind is imbued with the first rudiments of religious knowledge, reverence, and affection for divine things, if God smile on the endeavour, shall be excited in the heart. But special care must be taken not to give fatiguing lectures, nor to make too powerful calls on the feelings. 'Here a little and there a little' must be the parent's motto in conveying instruction at this age; and for that little, the seasons must be chosen when the child is most likely to lend a willing ear; and the subject must always be dropped before it becomes tiresome, unless there be some very pressing call for its being continued; in which case, indeed, the occasion itself will generally make it interesting.

"Very short and simple stories from Holy Writ may be employed with great advantage: as that of Jesus taking little children in his arms and blessing them; that of his restoring the widow's son to life; and many others. If these are told in a cheerful manner, and with such little appropriate touches as will present the scene to the imagination of the child, they will seldom fail to delight it, and will be called for again and again. When they are fixed in its memory, it is evident with what great advantage reference may be made to them when the parent finds occasion to have recourse to dissuasion, reproof, or exhortation.

“In conveying instruction it is a most important point for the parent always to bear in mind, that far more may be done by exciting the sympathy of the child than by appealing to its reason. Things indeed should always be presented to it in the garb of truth and good sense; but unless its feelings are in unison with its convictions, it may be perfectly persuaded of truths without being influenced by them in practice.”*

The parables of the Gospel afford an admirable means of instruction for the simple minds of children, and often present us with a favourable opportunity of elucidating moral truths; for the precepts even of Scripture itself should not be presented in a bare and dry form. A duty thus prescribed produces a disagreeable impression on children. If some passage from the Holy Writings be constantly brought forward to enforce every prohibition, or to justify every act of severity, we seem to use the will of God only as a pretext to conceal our own; and this will soon produce a feeling of indifference to our lessons — a suspicion of their secret object.

Children frequently act from praiseworthy and entirely disinterested motives: they are particularly alive to the pleasure of being

* A Practical View of Christian Education in its Early Stages, by Thomas Babington, Esq.

praised and loved by their parents, and by God Himself. But if we do not address ourselves to these feelings; if we present to them only a dry and generally wearisome rule of conduct, we must soon have recourse to the idea of future rewards or punishments; and more especially to the latter, as they make the greatest impression on their minds. Fear, of all feelings the most injurious to this age, predominates in such impressions; and it is a barbarous and wanton opposition to the evident intention of Providence, thus to disturb the security of infancy. As a compensation for their want of strength, Heaven has endowed children with a confiding disposition: and to represent God to them otherwise than as a good God — a kind Father — is both false and blasphemous.

Not however that we are to separate the idea of God from that of holiness; we should err on the other side if we did not occasionally present the sublime image of the Deity with a countenance of severity. God's hatred of evil, his anger when his justice is outraged, are the necessary consequences of his most benevolent attributes. The conviction that almighty power is constantly employed in maintaining the order of the universe, and enforcing obedience to the laws of duty, is almost necessarily connected with a feeling of fear in the minds of children; though this fear may be absorbed in the pre-

vailing idea of the goodness of God, and of the protection afforded to the weak by his perfect justice. He is in a particular manner the Father of little children: He cherishes and protects those who are good; He listens to their prayers, assists them in their endeavours to obey Him, and pardons on repentance their involuntary faults. No doubt He abhors evil, and will not dwell with the wicked: but He loves the work of his own hands; He opens his arms to receive them as soon as a true repentance has changed the evil propensities of their heart. Jesus Christ has interceded, has sacrificed himself for man; and when the sinner invokes his holy name, he is pardoned, and even restored — his sins are washed away.

Such is the evangelical doctrine of which a slight sketch may be given to children. The idea of the almighty power of a pure and holy God, and of the love of this God, which is in proportion to the efforts made by children to obey Him, will by degrees form their code of morality. The influence of gentle and tender sentiments of piety is naturally more salutary, as well as more lasting, than that of fear; for children, owing to their volatile disposition, easily throw off the idea of a God whom they do not see, and whose punishments do not always immediately follow any deviation from duty.

With regard to the union, so important and so desirable, of religion and morality in education, it is of great consequence to ascertain exactly in what it consists. Certainly we can have no proof of the progress, or even existence of religion in the human breast, but what is derived from the power it exercises over the conduct. The moral point of view is that to which we must continually recur, as it is from this alone that we can judge of the sincerity and right direction of our ideas of religion. But these ideas place our eternal interests in the highest rank; they teach us to consider the fulfilment of our duties in this world as the necessary condition of our future union with God; and if we invert this order of things, if we make this life alone "our being's end and aim," even though our aim may be to pass through it prudently and honourably, we yet deprive religion of all its strength and virtue. Taking it as a means only, it must fail. The essence of religion consists in the love of God: if then you wish that religion should serve as a foundation for morality, inspire your children with this feeling; make them regard the Almighty as the author of every good, and the dispenser of every enjoyment, before you represent Him as a judge, or a perpetual censor. Why should we cultivate the feeling of piety in a different manner from that which we adopt in

order to cherish an earthly affection? The mother caresses her infant long before she corrects it: she is anxious to express her gentle and affectionate feelings, in order that the recollection of her tenderness may at some future time temper the effect of her severity. And in the same manner God himself acts towards little children, making Himself known to them by his benefits, before He reveals Himself by the more severe voice of conscience. It is an act of injustice towards the Most High, if we may use such an expression, to present Him to children under a form which He has not chosen for Himself, and which we do not choose for ourselves. The love of God is the root of all piety; but in our too eager desire to gather the fruit, we are apt to neglect the necessary cultivation of the root.

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

UNLESS the desire to render to God the homage of adoration become, throughout the course of a religious education, stronger in proportion to the progress of instruction, the knowledge of the most sublime truths will not fructify in the mind. Nature and the Gospel alike reveal to us a Creator; but it is only by means of religious worship that our souls can enter into communion with Him. Without this, we should remain strangers to God, indifferent to his perfections, little solicitous of approximating to them even in that slight degree of which we are capable, and deprived of that succour which religion,—a religion lively, active, and fruitful in good works—yields to every individual.

The worship of the heart is no doubt the most perfect of all: the homage thus involuntarily offered is more energetic, more really sincere, than that which is produced by example, nurtured by habit, and guided by prescribed forms. But how can children be led to this pure adoration? How can we first excite, and afterwards continually renew that sublime

rapture, which, without any external impulse, raises the soul to God? To inspire children with this internal and spontaneous worship, the adoration of a God who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, should ever be our aim: but neither this, nor any other object in education, can be attained without much care, and a judicious choice of means.

The most natural method, and that best adapted to the attainment of the proposed end, is for a mother freely and openly to communicate her own impressions: if she herself feel deeply the mercies she receives from God, her child will soon do so likewise. If, when he receives some unexpected pleasure, he hears her thank God for bestowing it on him, he will soon unite his praises to hers. "Oh my God, I thank Thee that Thou hast made such a person so good to me," is the simple form of thanksgiving which Mrs. Hamilton recommends to be suggested to a child when he finds himself the object of some unexpected favour. God, who holds the hearts of men in his hand—God, who clothes the lily of the field, and forgetteth not even the little bird,—God, who is the immediate author of all that we behold in nature, and who has bestowed on weak human beings those brilliant faculties which have enabled them to produce such wonders of art,—with such a subject we can never be at a loss for

interesting conversation with our children ; and it is one which may at the same time be proportioned to every degree of feeling, as well as of intelligence, and may lead the way to their fullest developement hereafter.

But after all, the most regular method is the most certain ; and this should consist in the practice of domestic worship of such a nature as will suit the age of the child : this will form a daily exercise of piety continually adapted to his growing capacity. Nothing is to be done without regularity ; we cannot produce any effect even on our own minds but by continuity of impression ; and when the question relates to the formation of devotional feelings, how can we trust to those temporary impressions which so continually deceive us ? Why not have recourse to that appropriation of certain hours which we find so useful on other occasions ?

If it be true that we cannot depend on ourselves, how much less can we do so on children. More volatile, more trifling, than we are, they are unaccustomed to occupy themselves with purely intellectual objects. Knowing little of morality, yet not aware of their ignorance, they must be taught to wish for more knowledge : we must fix deeply in their minds a desire for growth in piety, and for daily aid and strength from Heaven. For this purpose, habits, forms, example, are all necessary instruments in order

to carry on the noblest work of education,—the formation of a religious spirit, and that consecration of the whole life which is its natural consequence.

The same sacred volume which furnishes us with opportunities of imparting religious instruction, becomes also an auxiliary in religious worship, affording us a powerful means of raising the soul to God. There is a peculiarity in the language of scripture, in its style so energetic and full of meaning, producing an effect of which nothing can supply the place to those who have been early imbued with its spirit; though it may perhaps astonish those by whom this spirit has not been imbibed. Children, naturally endowed with a wonderful instinct for every thing which relates to the expression of the thoughts, soon feel its force and beauty. Passages selected from the Bible, but read from the book itself, not changed into a form or language of our own, inspire them with reverence, and at the same time greatly excite their interest. The grandeur and oriental splendour of the images of the Old Testament captivate their imagination : the simplicity and plainness of the parables in the New Testament touch their hearts. But it is the Psalms more especially which open to them an abundant source of consolation and love. From them they learn a feeling for the beauties of creation, and a per-

ception of the harmony subsisting between religion and nature. Some of these psalms are repeated, even by the youngest children, with perfect delight, and are never heard in after life without emotions of the greatest pleasure. It would be very desirable to have hymns, simple in their language, and adapted to the capacities of very young children, composed on these beautiful models.* In all infant schools the children sing hymns together with an effect which is really touching; they understand and feel what they sing, and even the youngest amongst them join their uncertain voices with the rest. Why should we refuse to avail ourselves of the powerful aid of harmony, where the object is so desirable, and the means so innocent?

But after all, prayer is the most important act of devotion,—that in fact which constitutes its essence. The sublime, yet simple, idea of prayer connects itself with all our notions of our relation to God. The mere contemplation of the Deity almost necessarily supposes a

* We are fortunate enough to possess, in our language, some most beautiful hymns, by the late Mrs. Barbauld, suited to children, and written in a strain of simple, but highly poetical prose. There is also a small volume of hymns for children, in verse, by Miss Jane Taylor, most of which are well adapted for their purpose; and many other simple hymns are in use at various infant schools, from which a very good and useful selection might be made. —
Note by Translator.

prayer, for it is associated with an invincible desire of drawing assistance from that inexhaustible source of strength and holiness and happiness. Prayer is a part of our nature; it is the sigh of the captive soul, in anticipation of its deliverance; — a presentiment of eternity.

This act of prayer, so natural in itself, is still more so to little children, whose life is passed in a series of petitions. Our language in addressing the Deity is almost all borrowed from theirs; so striking, though imperfect, is the resemblance between their relation to us, and ours to God. In their little distresses they cry out “my father,” as we also appeal to our Father in Heaven. From the moment that their souls have been penetrated by a ray of Divine light, they feel the duty of prayer.

With regard to prayer, as indeed to every thing else relating to religious worship, the only way to render it a spontaneous and involuntary impulse is to begin by making it a regular exercise. Every morning we should endeavour to raise the infant mind to its Creator, without even waiting for the time when what may be called instruction begins. The name of God is hardly ever entirely unknown to children; they have heard this holy name pronounced with love and reverence long before they could attach to it any distinct idea; and thus have their hearts been prepared for the reception of the sublime idea

of a communion with God. If you perceive such an impression to have been made, cherish and strengthen it by degrees, taking care that it remain a gentle and happy feeling. If you have older children who already partake with advantage in the blessing of prayer, bring in the youngest towards the conclusion of this exercise of devotion; hold him in your arms, join his little hands together, and in a short simple prayer, implore the blessing of the Almighty upon him, and upon his brothers and sisters. This should last only a moment; but *that* moment will suffice for the putting forth a tender bud, which will every day expand more and more.

Even if you have no older children, you may, at a very early age, allow your child to join with you in prayer. Teach him to say, "Oh, my God, I love Thee, Thou art so good, and I beseech Thee to love me." If these simple words are uttered with genuine feeling, they will soon convey a general meaning to the child; they will at any rate excite in him a tender feeling, and this is all we can desire. He will most likely inquire whether you can see God, and you will tell him that you cannot, but that He always sees you, that He hears and knows every thing, and that He loves children who try to be very good.

It will be remarked that in practice I would

have a certain degree of religious instruction and religious worship accompany each other ; but were it necessary that one should precede the other, I should begin with the latter. If we were speaking of earthly objects, no doubt they must be known before they can be loved : but with regard to God, it is only by adoring that we are able to comprehend Him : our knowledge springs from our love.

An intelligent and forward child of about three years old is generally capable of receiving the first dawnings of religion into his soul, and consequently of joining in religious worship. This period may be retarded ; some very pious mothers do not teach their children to pray before they are seven years old. If feelings of piety have been given in some other way, and the hope of being allowed to pray has occupied the mind as much as the act itself would have done, this delay may have the advantage of reserving the novelty, and consequently the strongest impression, of prayer to an age when children are less docile and more apt to escape from our authority. But on any other supposition I would never advise the sacrifice of the certain effect of habit, for this sort of *economy* in the employment of means which may not be always at our disposal. We risk too much when we trust, for this less manageable age, to a re-

source which the age itself of our child renders it less easy to employ.

Not to mention the most important benefit of prayer,— the mercies it obtains from God,— it may, if directed by an intelligent mother, be made a most useful instrument in forming the character of a child. Nothing so immediately influences the spirit of religion as the assistance which we implore in aid of our religious feelings. To pray that we may love God more and more, will tend to imbue our hearts more deeply with his love: to implore that we may be inspired with a piety, tender, active, and charitable, towards our fellow creatures, is to conceive what such a feeling ought to be. Of course it must be understood that the child is not to be made to repeat a mere form; every word that he utters must come from the heart. The moral influence of prayer is also great. Make your child repeat after you, sentence by sentence, little prayers as simple as possible in his own language, and varied to suit different occasions, and you have thus an easy and pleasing means of communicating to him all those feelings with which you wish him to be inspired. Gratitude towards those who take care of him, gentleness, docility, zeal in the performance of his little duties, — in short, all those dispositions which are most desirable for children of this age, may be cultivated by means of religious worship.

In order to fix the wandering attention of the child, and to bring before his mind the great object of religious adoration, his mother may begin in her own name with an invocation more solemn than I dare take upon myself to dictate ; such a one may easily be selected from any of our best devotional writers.* But as regards the child, in order that what I mean may be clearly understood, I subjoin a few simple little prayers, such as may easily be comprehended by children of three years old. I have expressed only such feelings as they may themselves have experienced, without attempting to introduce any points of doctrine. No doubt much better and more perfect might be composed, for in order to suit them to the mind of very young children I have confined each prayer to a single subject, either of petition or thanksgiving ; but I may be permitted to add that these have been used with very good effect.

“Oh my God, Thou takest care of me, and hast pity on me ! Thou knowest that I am little

* In the original, a short introductory prayer by M. Cellerier is given here : but the translator has preferred leaving the choice of one to individual parents. For the same reason only a few from amongst a number of prayers for children have been translated. Parents will easily see that extreme simplicity is the great object, and will adapt the subject of any prayer to the particular disposition of their child.

and weak, that I cannot even dress or feed myself without help, and that if I were left to myself, I should be very unhappy; but every one helps me, every one loves me. Thou, oh my God, hast made my friends so kind to me; oh do Thou reward them for it, and make me very thankful and very good. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that I pray unto Thee."

"Oh my God, I wish much to obey Thee, but I am continually doing something wrong. I feel that without thy help I shall never be quite good. Oh help me to keep thy commandments, and to love Thee with all my heart, and to have Thee in all my thoughts, and also to love my neighbour as myself. I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ thy son."

I will add here two prayers, which may serve to give children an idea of the addresses which they may present to God at the beginning and at the end of the day, if by any chance they should be left alone.

MORNING PRAYER.

"Oh God! I thank Thee that Thou hast taken care of me during the night; preserve me also during the day, I beseech Thee. May I try to remember that Thou art always near me, and then I shall be afraid of nothing but of

offending Thee. Bless, O God! my parents, and all whom I love. It is in the name of Jesus Christ," &c.

EVENING PRAYER.

" Oh my God! I will not lie down without first asking Thy blessing. Thou hast been very good to me during the past day; and yet I feel that I have done many things that were wrong. Pardon me, Oh Lord, — I will try to be a better child to-morrow. I am now going to sleep, believing that Thou wilt take care of me whilst I am asleep. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray," &c.

These prayers may perhaps appear rather too vague; but children should be encouraged to form more definite ones for themselves. Should they express what they really wish for in their hearts, their wishes may very likely sound extremely childish; but what does this signify? Is it not very probable that many of our own wishes, in regard to this world, may be so too? Let us rejoice that they speak to God from the depth of their souls, without troubling ourselves about their little secrets. At the same time we must warn them that all human wishes are but too often rash and inconsiderate, and must always be referred entirely to the will of that Heavenly Father who cares for our happiness. By

advising them to beg that their prayers may not be heard if the fulfilment of them would be hurtful to them, we shall accustom them to bear privations with gentleness and patience, and shall prepare them to submit to disappointments and troubles with that resignation supported by hope, which is called trust in God.

Whatever latitude we may allow children in their more private devotions, there is one prayer, our Lord's, which they should learn by heart, as soon as they have formed a habit of praying at all. This will be their faithful companion from their cradle to their death-bed: the full meaning of every thing which it includes is constantly growing upon us, and the older we become the more do we find in it to admire and to dwell upon.

CHAPTER X.

RECAPITULATION OF FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE
STUDY OF THE MIND IN INFANCY.

HAVING now arrived at that period when the constantly increasing progress of the child has determined his existence as a moral being, and when a new era is offered to our observation, it seems desirable to throw back a rapid glance over the road we have already passed. Henceforward we shall find it more difficult to analyse the feelings and impressions of our pupil; every thing connected with him will be more complicated, more obscure; education and example will have acted upon him; his natural inclinations will often be repressed by the effect of reflection, though the secret impulse which gave rise to these inclinations may remain unchanged. It is therefore of great importance to examine and understand in time dispositions which, though destined to become weaker, will not cease to exist in the mind.

Without stopping to retrace those moral consequences which clearly result from the facts already observed, I shall here recapitulate the history of the child from its birth; and though

the state of the mind at this period can be but little known : it seems to me that there are some ideas resulting either from observation, or from our preconceived notions, which we can hardly avoid adopting, and which I shall here mention.

The soul, a pure intelligence, cast upon a world entirely unknown to it, finds itself united to a portion of matter, equally unknown to it, called a body. Susceptible of infinite developement, endowed with the dispositions necessary to enable it to connect itself with the moral and physical world, its activity seems condemned to remain dormant till its faculties are brought into action, and furnished with materials for their exercise, by means of the impressions which it receives through the medium of the body. But the impressions excited by the senses are not of a nature fitted to establish every relation which the soul is capable of maintaining ; other resources are necessary. Assistance has, therefore, at the commencement of its existence, been provided for it, which may be called supernatural, if we may so term effects of which we cannot discover the cause. This aid, which we have named instinct, has been supplied, but not lavished. Constantly granted on all necessary occasions, it is withheld when, by making a proper use of the lessons of experience, the mind is able to dispense with its assistance.

Thus, immediately after birth, there is no manifestation of the attributes of the soul; the wonderful machine in which it is inclosed is at present useless, because it has not yet learnt how to make use of it. In vain does this admirable organisation seem to have been intended to produce two different effects: one to inform the soul of what is passing without, the other to execute its orders. The soul, as yet, does not understand any information which the body conveys to it, and has no orders to give. Imprisoned in a twofold ignorance, it can know nothing of external objects but through the medium of the senses; and external objects alone can reveal to it the properties of these organs.

Not that the concurrence of the will is necessary to enable the soul to receive impressions: it feels pain and pleasure; but intelligence is as yet passive. To the infant every thing is vague and confused; nothing has any reality or any individuality. The forms which pass and repass before its eyes are but as fugitive shadows. The various noises which it hears, the shocks which it receives from solid bodies, are only insulated events: it experiences changes and modifications which it does not understand. In this state even hunger would be to a new-born infant mere pain, with which no idea of relief would be associated. Not knowing what it wanted, it would die of inanition, if its Creator had not

provided for the continuance of its existence. Here, then, instinct becomes necessary, and here, therefore, it has been given: the infant seeks the maternal breast, and is soothed and nourished.

But the frequent repetition of the same impressions brings into action the faculties of the soul. The different sensations of the child become connected in his mind, and are reproduced by his memory in the same order in which the realities were presented to him. I have seen an infant, only a fortnight old, too young certainly to be able to distinguish objects, show plainly that it understood when its mother was about to nurse it. It must therefore have both recollected and hoped; two important faculties, memory and imagination, were excited; the intellectual being was called into action.

Nor does it seem as if the feebleness of the body at this tender age were any impediment to the developement of the intellect; for this feebleness affects only those members of the body which are to execute the orders of the soul, and as yet it has no orders to give. On the other hand, the bodily organs, those, for instance, of sensation, which merely convey intelligence to the soul, begin to perform their functions immediately: the eye and the ear bring information, little understood it is true, but perfectly accurate. Thus a concurrent

progress seems to have been prescribed to the moral and physical faculties, in order that, as the soul becomes more able to command, it may find in the body a docile and expert servant.

When the child has succeeded in making the testimonies of his different senses agree with each other, his notions become more fixed ; the external world appears to him under more definite forms ; he believes himself surrounded with real objects, and begins to awaken from a dreamy state of existence, in which every thing had appeared confused and uncertain.

But, besides its connection with the material world, the soul, essentially spiritual in its nature, has nobler faculties, requiring a different sort of exercise. Another set of phenomena are soon displayed in a young infant, which are clearly to be distinguished from the class of sensitive ideas. It is indeed astonishing to observe how little knowledge seems necessary to the development of the moral faculties in children. Before they have learnt to use their hands, and, by grasping things, to attain a conviction of the reality of their existence, one object has penetrated through the thick mist in which every thing seems to them shrouded, and has awakened their tender feelings. This object is an expressive countenance, a countenance which has smiled upon them. At this sight the soul springs forward to meet another soul ;

though hitherto it had discerned nothing, it now at once recognises a kindred spirit; and hence arises the feeling of sympathy, that wonderful instinct, that astonishing divination, which even from the very commencement of life, independent of any experience, initiates this tender age into those mysteries of the heart which no age is able to fathom.

The feeling of expectation, which the regular succession of their sensations produces in children, proves that they have a sort of confused belief in the constancy of the laws of nature. A first event is the precursor to them of a second; and, although it is their imagination only which is called into action, we may discover in its anticipations the source of future reason. The new-born infant soon finds out that he exercises a power over himself: that he can, for example, suspend or prolong the screams which were at first involuntary; and, when he perceives that by moving his own limbs he can communicate motion to other objects, he feels himself a cause, and the great idea of cause and effect is insensibly awakened in his mind. Confined at first to a physical order of things, it is not long before it is transferred also to moral order. As soon as he becomes aware that he can act upon his fellow-beings, he makes use of them as his instruments: he pushes, and attempts to direct those who carry him; and his will, powerless as regards himself,

is exerted on beings superior to him in strength. From this time an indefinable sort of intercourse exists between him and his protectors. Though not able to communicate with us by means of ideas, we see him enlightened by the intelligence of sympathy, which soon creates a language for itself. And, when to this instinct of the heart is added the feeling of genuine tenderness, an exchange of impressions is established between ourselves and our children, the vivacity and rapid variations of which are often too great a trial for their tender constitutions.

But, as their strength increases, it affords a more salutary exercise to their faculties : their movements become more certain and more easy, and allow of their executing little plans, the accomplishment of which is always a source of pleasure. The desire of imitation, arising from the necessity they feel for action and sympathy, suggests a thousand attempts, which produce a variety of situations, and thus lead to further progress. From this time the greater part of those motives which influence human beings come successively into action. We may observe all the various emotions of selfishness, pride, petulance, shame, resentment, as well as of generosity and pity, in children of a year old. Incapable of consecutive thought, they are influenced by the same desires, tastes, predilections, and antipathies which we experience,

and which we sometimes endeavour to refer to our reason, when it has, perhaps, little to do in the matter.

But the subject which excites the greatest interest in our observation of children is the gradual formation of those traits of character which distinguish the human race, and bestow upon it an especial rank in the scale of creation. A new-born infant, whatever proofs of intelligence it may give, is yet inferior to any other animal of the same age in one essential point, — the power of providing for its own preservation. The improvement in its organs of sense may seem, indeed, less unaccountable to us, (that is, we can better trace the connection of cause and effect in the process,) but it is much slower in its progress than that of the inferior animals. Whether it be that their shorter life would not allow time for the slow lessons of experience, or that an inferior degree of intelligence requires more direct assistance, certain it is that the wonders of instinct are much more numerous and more striking in the young of other animals than in infant man. But, notwithstanding this humiliation of the human being on his entrance into the world, it is interesting to recognise, in some traits of his character, the harbingers of future pre-eminence.

Amongst such signs of superiority may be

We find, then, that very young children form judgments which are the result of a hasty comparison; but this is not the operation of a mind comparing together former judgments, and drawing from them general conclusions, and therefore does not deserve to be called reasoning. Two things are wanting to enable them to claim this distinction: — a sufficient stock of facts to furnish materials for reasoning, and sufficiently strong motives to induce them to use the materials they have collected. Necessity obliges adults to propose to themselves some definite object, and in order to attain it they must employ a course of reasoning; but, as a creature who does not provide for his own wants feels no necessity for action, so there is no determined object, to the attainment of which he attaches any importance. The mere temporary plans which children form are only so many opportunities for the exercise of their strength; action itself, not the effect of this action, is their object. Imaginary desires, variable and fluctuating as their source, exercise their faculties, without requiring too great an effort of attention.

At this early period the imagination is necessarily predominant. Even before children are able to speak, their minds are not idle, but are animated by a variety of emotions; various scenes, no doubt, are passing through them; objects which have struck their senses are there painted

after nature, independent of all the contrivances of art; and the picture of the past, thus renewed, excites either fear or hope. Even when they begin to speak, this internal exhibition still goes on with the same vividness: perhaps at every age it is in some measure continued, though with less distinctness. Hence those recollections and images which come upon us at times in the midst of a life of more reflection, — a life in which our thoughts, now clothed in words, deprive these internal representations of much of their brilliancy. With children, on the contrary, their insulated words, few in number, and for a long time unconnected with their interests, do not serve either to veil these images, or to diminish their effect. For a long time every fresh step which they advance only adds strength to these impressions; till, at last, the habitual use of language has become almost a part of themselves, and their intellectual powers find in it a more calm and regular exercise.

In order that the movements of the soul may be voluntary, it must contain within itself motives for action; and these Providence has bestowed on the new-born infant. The feelings of the heart are excited by sympathy: and the faculties of the mind are brought into action by the pleasures of the imagination, always so lively in very young children. Possessing no innate

knowledge, motives for acquiring it become necessary. Want, the stimulus which urges man to the exercise of his faculties, has no power over children, for whom, without a thought on their part, every thing needful is provided: a desire for objects, merely as such, is therefore necessary to them, and this is abundantly furnished by the imagination. Action, moral and physical, is required to complete the development of their powers; and, accordingly, they delight in activity long before any feeling of necessity has given a rational aim to their actions. . As soon as they are able to appreciate the result of their efforts they become capable of reflection.

Preoccupied, as it seems to me, with what is deficient in children, we are too apt to overlook the liberality of Providence towards them. We do not remark that the order in which their faculties are unfolded, and which is rendered necessary by their ignorance, is the order most advantageous both for their moral and rational progress. Capable of feeling those tender affections from which the first idea of conscience seems to arise, they are, by this means, subjected to the influence of education, and may soon be impressed with that love of God which will lead hereafter to the perfecting of their character. Eager in the pursuit of varied sensations, they interest themselves in a

thousand objects which, by exciting a variety of feelings, keep their volatile minds in constant activity. The pleasure which they take in imitation, added to that feeling of admiration of which they become daily more susceptible, soon awakens in them a taste for the arts in their simplest form. Stories, music, coloured prints, figures in relief, all delight children; and, from admiring, they soon become artists themselves. Copying and inventing by turns, they attempt to realize in their productions both what they have learnt and what they imagine. Their life is a series of pleasing or ridiculous fictions: gardens and palaces are created by their little hands, and their amusements are those of infantine genius.

Thus, even at this tender age, do the most striking attributes of our nature display themselves. Great and daring faculties, at first humble and timid, try their powers in frivolous attempts which excite only a smile of pity. And yet the dispensation by which their development is rendered certain is most benevolent, and it is fortunate for us that imagination necessarily predominates in very young children. For while the march of civilisation secures the progress of the exact sciences, and is constantly favouring the exercise of the reasoning and analysing powers, those delightful gifts, which, from their seeming less necessary and useful

may be termed the luxuries of our nature, might, perhaps, have been lost to our species, had they not been thus secured by the constitution of the infant mind. Thus is nature ever fruitful in resources ! Thus does the temporary youthfulness of the individual guarantee the eternal youthfulness of the species. Thus are the treasures of the human mind preserved uninjured, talents become imperishable, and we still hear the accents of the earliest ages resounding in our older world.

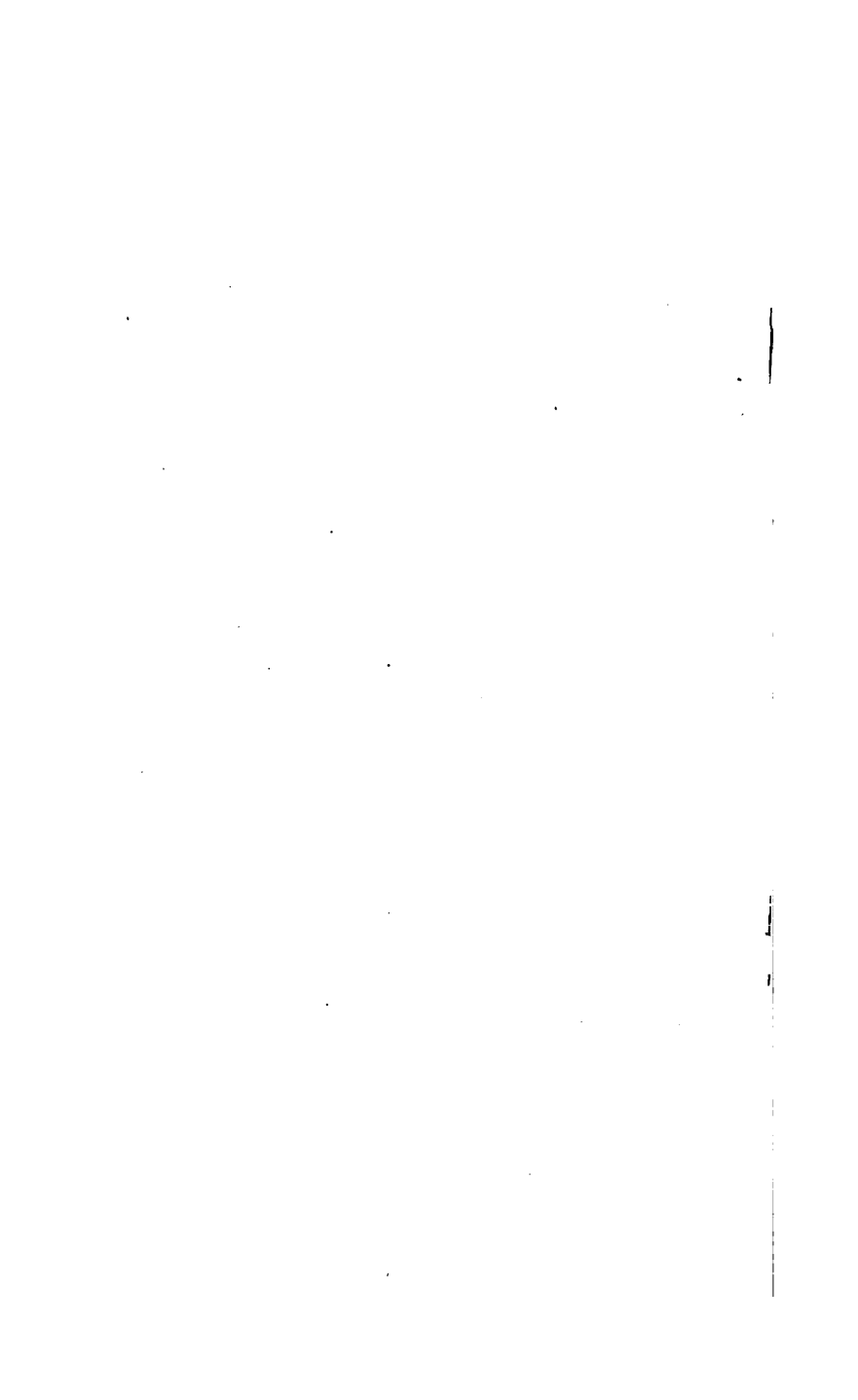
But if, by the power of imagination in children, a constant variety of dispositions, and an originality continually renewing itself, have been created in the human race, so has a source of universal harmony, also, been provided in that desire of sympathy with which they are inspired. When their feelings do not harmonise with those of the society of which they begin to form a part, such dispositions as meet with little or no sympathy soon die away ; and, without losing the more marked features originally impressed upon him, the child becomes by degrees, in every other respect, the man of the particular country and age to which he belongs.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON :

Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.





July 1843.

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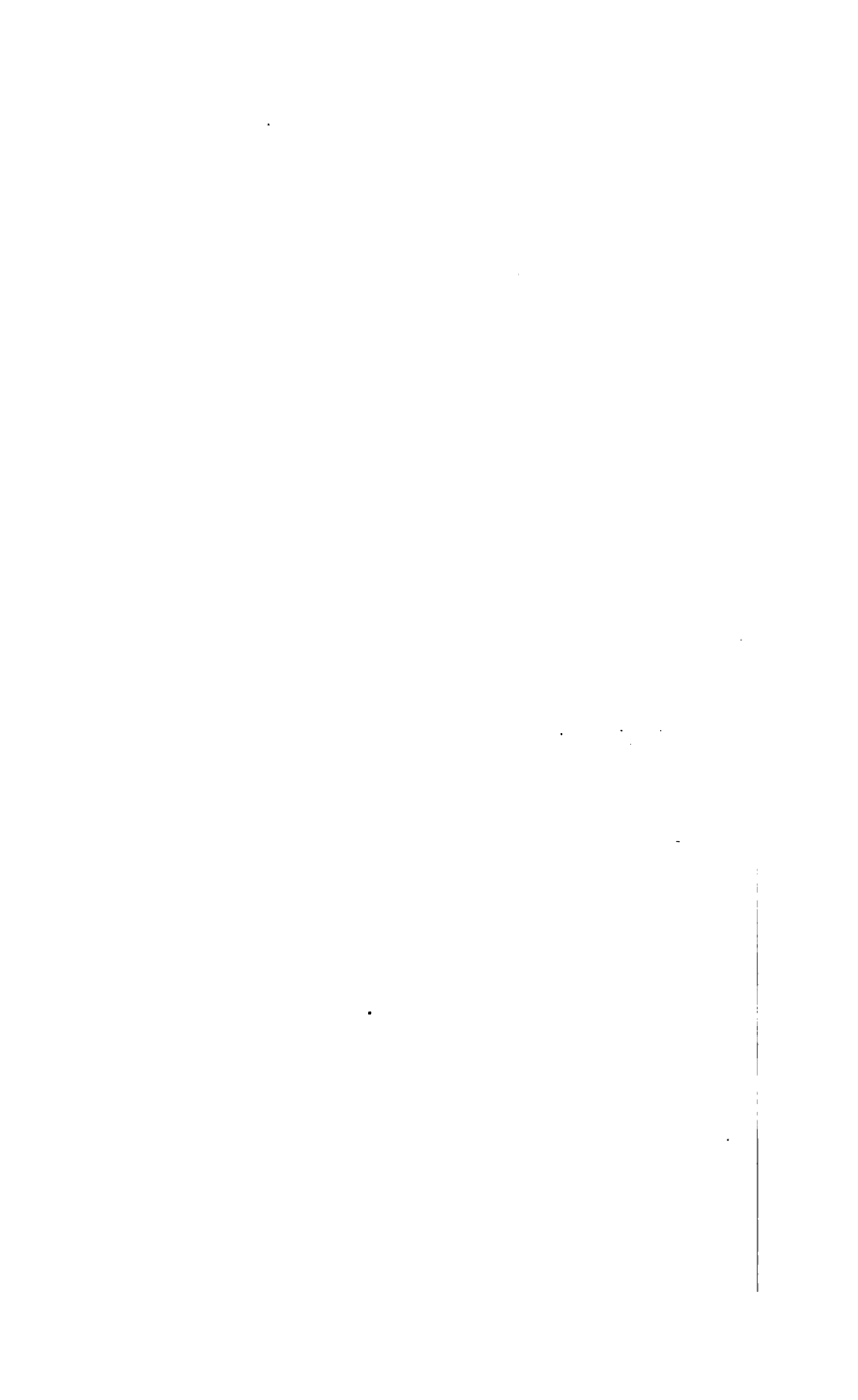
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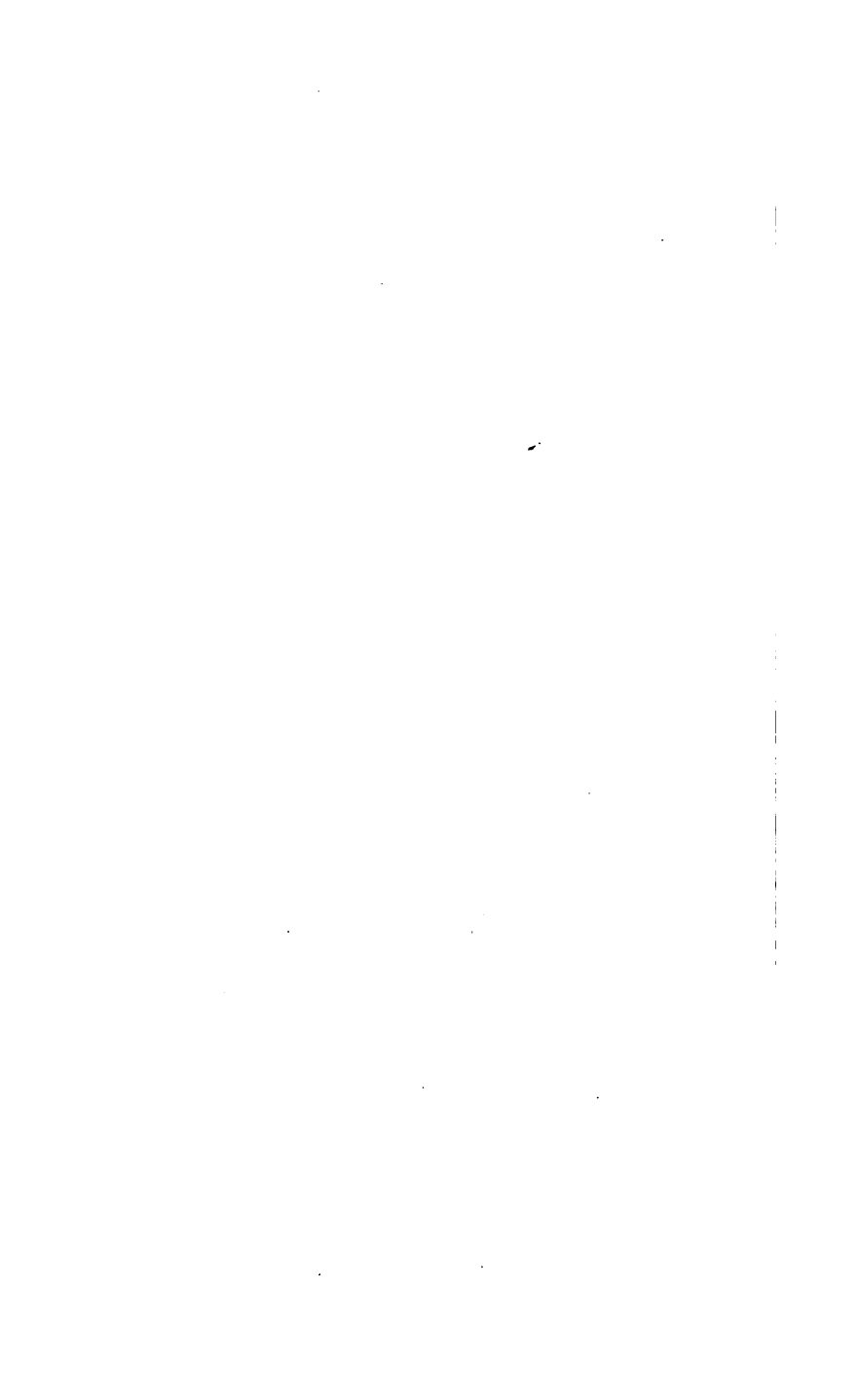
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